

Yeltsin foes form common front

MOSCOW (R) — Russian conservative and nationalist opponents of President Boris Yeltsin announced on Wednesday they were joining forces to save Russia and halt a process of mindless reform. A joint statement, signed by leaders of parliamentary and non-parliamentary groups, announced the formation of the Russian movement "Accord for Russia." The only significant hardline opposition group not represented was Vladimir Zhirinovskiy's Liberal Democratic Party. Most centrist groups were also missing. The statement said the aims of the new movement include: "To prevent the final collapse of historic Russia, the destruction of the cultural, economic and political ties between its equal peoples formed over centuries," and "to stop reforms (just) for the sake of reforms, to stop the disintegration of domestic industry and to protect national markets and capital." The wording was clearly aimed at the former architect of Russian radical reforms, Yegor Gaidar.

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27 parties sign up for S. African polls

JOHANNESBURG (R) — The final deadline for parties to sign up for South Africa's first all-race elections in April passed on Wednesday with 27 confirming that they will take part. They include Nelson Mandela's African National Congress (ANC), widely expected to win, and the governing National Party, but a spokesman for the Zulu-based Inkatha Freedom Party said just before the deadline that it would not register candidates. The white right-wing Freedom Front of former Defence Chief General Constand Viljoen, who broke with other white rightists boycotting the vote to back demands for an Afrikaner homeland, met the deadline for registering candidates. Freedom Front spokesman Joseph Chiole, a former member of parliament for the pro-apartheid Conservative Party, said the front would contest all national and provincial assembly seats.

Kazakhstan 'fulfilling nuclear arms deals'

ALMA ATA (R) — President Nursultan Nazarbayev of Kazakhstan said on Wednesday his giant former Soviet republic was destroying its nuclear arsenal according to plan. "The world need not worry because the republic is demonstrating consistency in the matter of liquidating nuclear warheads," he told a small group of Western journalists in an interview. Kazakhstan, one of four former Soviet republics with nuclear arms, has ratified the Start-1 arms reduction treaty and decided to join the nuclear Non-Proliferation Treaty, prompting the United States to pledge \$396 million in new economic help. U.S. officials say Kazakhstan has 104 SS-18 long-range missiles and 1,040 warheads to go with them.

Slovak president forms government

BRATISLAVA (R) — Slovak President Michal Kovac on Wednesday installed a new government comprised of members of the five parties that engineered a no-confidence vote to oust Prime Minister Vladimir Meciar. Leaders of the broad coalition earlier this week chose former Foreign Minister Jozef Moravcik to replace Mr. Meciar as prime minister. Mr. Kovac swore in the 17 new cabinet members at the ceremony in Bratislava castle.

Tunisia enters 'post-oil era'

TUNIS (R) — Tunisia said Wednesday it had entered the post-oil era after it spent more on oil imports in 1993 than it earned from oil exports. Economy Minister Sadok Rabeh said it was the first time in more than 20 years that Tunisia had registered a deficit in the oil account. "Starting in 1994, Tunisia enters the post-oil era," he told reporters. Official figures showed a 1993 deficit in the oil account of 22.9 million dinars (\$23 million). In 1992, it showed a surplus of 141.3 million dinars (\$142 million). Tunisia traditionally produces over five million tonnes of oil a year. To satisfy domestic needs, it has been importing certain varieties of crude and refined oils. At the same time, it has been exporting varieties of its own.

Iran holds war games in Gulf

NICOSIA (AP) — Iran's navy Wednesday began three days of manoeuvres in the Gulf and the Sea of Oman to test the force's fighting power, the Islamic Republic News Agency (IRNA) reported. IRNA quoted Alireza Tangsiri, a naval commander, as saying the war games were simulating attacks on enemy forces. He said marines and frogmen were taking part in the manoeuvres, which he said would help evaluate "the combat power" of the force and "the efficiency of communication systems." The agency said the exercise is named "Shahamat."

Clinton, Rabin urge PLO and Syria to return to peace talks

Little details emerge of White House meeting

WASHINGTON (Agencies) — Israeli Prime Minister Yitzhak Rabin and President Bill Clinton on Wednesday called on Palestinian leader Yasser Arafat and President Hafez Al Assad of Syria to reopen peace negotiations with Israel. After a meeting with Mr. Rabin, Mr. Clinton said 1994 still can be a year for peace in the Middle East. But, he said, "we are further from that peace than we expected a month ago." Mr. Rabin seemed to hold out the prospect of concessions if Mr. Assad would end his three-week boycott. "We are ready to negotiate peace with Syria," Mr. Rabin said. "There must be give and take on both sides." President Bill Clinton encouraged the overture. He said he had talked by telephone a few days ago to Assad and is convinced "he wants to make peace with Israel."

One killed and 60 wounded by Israelis in Hebron, Gaza

HEBRON, Occupied West Bank (Agencies) — One Palestinian was killed and at least 30 were wounded in clashes with soldiers that erupted Wednesday when the army briefly lifted a 20-day curfew imposed after last month's massacre. Another 30 were wounded in clashes elsewhere in the occupied territories.

Troops shot Amjad Awawi, 22, in the neck, officials at Alia hospital said. Ten other youths were wounded by rubber bullets in the legs, they said. Another 20 people were treated for injuries, tear-gas and inhalation, they said.

A running battle broke out between about 200 youths throwing stones and soldiers responding with tear-gas and rubber bullets about 30 minutes after the curfew was lifted at 1 p.m. (1100 GMT) and continued for over three hours, Palestinian reporters said.

The army confirmed the clash, but reported no deaths or injuries. Israel has barred Hebron's 110,000 residents from leaving their homes since Feb. 25, when settler Baruch Goldstein massacred dozens of Palestinians. The curfew is lifted sometimes for up to two hours to allow residents to buy food.

The clashes erupted Wednesday near Beit Hadasah, the oldest of six Jewish enclaves holding 450 settlers. Palestinian protesters said. In the Gaza Strip, Palestinian reporters said 30 youths were wounded in Jabalya refugee camp in similar clashes with the army.

Palestinian probe finds troops had role in mosque bloodbath

HEBRON, occupied West Bank (Agencies) — Arab judges and lawyers investigating the Hebron massacre said Wednesday they believe soldiers played a role in the deaths at the mosque, despite testimony to the contrary by Israeli officials.

"Soldiers had a role in the massacre, because they shot inside the mosque and in the area outside. They also killed Palestinians near the hospital and the cemetery," said Abdul Ghani Awawi, a lawyer on the 11-member Palestinian panel investigating the Feb. 25 massacre.

The Hebron lawyer said that after interviewing over 70 witnesses, the panel had reached the same conclusion as the Israeli military that 34 people had been shot dead the day of the massacre. Their complete report is due within three weeks.

The key discrepancies to date revolve around Palestinian claims that army gunfire was responsible for at least one death in the mayhem as worshippers tried to escape the mosque.

led after the massacre of dozens of Palestinians by a Jewish extremist Feb. 25.

Mr. Rabin had vowed in the past not to "go down" from the Golan. But he declined to reaffirm that stand in an exchange with a reporter.

"This is an issue to be addressed between Syria and Israel," he said.

Then, at a joint news conference with Mr. Clinton, he said: "We know that as we engage in serious and authoritative negotiations the point will come where painful decisions will have to be made. The promise of peace and its genuine benefits... justifies making such decisions vis-a-vis Syria."

"We will stand ready to do what is required of us if the Syrians are ready to do what is required of them," Mr. Rabin said.

"Peace with Syria has always been our strategic choice," he said.

Mr. Rabin vowed, meanwhile, to overcome difficulties that have snarled Mideast negotiations "and reach the reopening peace negotiations stage."

Peres: Some steps possible

TEL AVIV (Agencies) — Israel might take additional steps in Hebron to meet Palestinian security concerns after the mosque massacre, but must resume negotiations to discuss them, Foreign Minister Shimon Peres said Wednesday.

He stressed that getting talks restarted with Syria, also suspended after the February massacre, were a priority of the meeting Wednesday between Prime Minister Yitzhak Rabin and President Bill Clinton in Washington.

"We can take additional steps in Hebron," Mr. Peres told a briefing of European correspondents, but added that Palestinian requests for removing the settlers in Hebron and introducing armed international observers were impossible.

He said the supreme court would rule as illegal any attempt by the government to remove the Jewish settlements in Hebron. Other cabinet ministers had voiced support

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American-born settler Baruch Goldstein, one right outside the mosque by army gunfire, one in the cemetery nearby and four in the crowds that gathered outside the Ahli Hospital treating scores of wounded.

Israeli Major General Danny Yatom, the top officer responsible for the West Bank, and other officers testified at the opening of the Israeli inquiry last week that Goldstein killed 29 inside the mosque, while army fire brought down four outside the hospital and one in a neighbourhood behind the mosque.

Gen. Yatom denied reports that soldiers had opened fire at the crowds trying to flee the gunfire. He said only that soldiers fired in the air inside the mosque, lodging a few bullets in the ceiling.

Witness accounts are often contradictory and difficult to piece together. But three Palestinian witnesses said Diab Karaki, 23, was shot by soldiers as he fled from the mosque.

Officials at the U.N. Relief and Works Agency (UNRWA) clinic in Gaza said soldiers barged in and barked insults at nurses during the clashes.

The army confirmed the clashes in Jabalya, but had no comment about the UNRWA incident.

The clashes broke out over the killing, by Israeli border police, of an activist of the Popular Front for the Liberation of Palestine (PFLP) in a gun fight on Tuesday.

Ahmad Muheisen, 22, a member of the PFLP's Red Eagles group, was from Jabalya.

Officials at Gaza's Shifa hospital said all the wounded were from the camp, home to some 60,000 Palestinian refugees. There were no reports of casualties among Israeli soldiers.

Officials said Kenyan President Daniel Arap Moi welcomed Lieutenant General Omar Hassan Al Bashir at Jomo Kenyatta International Airport and they held preparatory talks at the state house.

Ethiopian President Meles Zenawi also flew into Kenya on Wednesday for the peace talks organised by himself and Mr. Moi and the presidents of Eritrea and Uganda, who arrive on Thursday.

A Foreign Ministry spokeswoman said informal consultations between Gen. Bashir, the host presidents and rebel leaders open on Thursday morning before formal negotiations in the afternoon.

The Nairobi meetings will be the fifth set of talks since 1989 to end the civil war between the north and south. Over 500,000 people have been killed and four million displaced.

Efforts to relaunch talks in Nairobi in February stalled when Gen. Bashir did not turn up.

"The fact Bashir arrived is a good sign," said Phil O'Brien, head of Operation Lifeline Sudan, the U.N.-led umbrella aid organisation.

The leaders of Kenya, Ethiopia, Eritrea and Uganda make up the Inter-Governmental Authority on Drought and Development.

One of the wounded, Amin Khalil Joulani, 17, said he was also shot in the legs by soldiers at the mosque entrance. Speaking from bed at home, Joulani said he was hit once in the leg by army gunfire when he ran forward to try to save a boy lying on the stairs leading out of the mosque.

"Soldiers shot again at the crowd of Palestinians trying to get inside the mosque, and I was hit by another bullet in my right leg," said Joulani. Women who were praying elsewhere in the mosque have said repeatedly that soldiers fired into the air and at worshippers running in panic.



His Royal Highness Crown Prince Hassan meets with Jordanian peacekeepers in Croatia (Photo by Bougas)

Jordanians to operate U.S. anti-artillery radar in Bosnia

By a Jordan Times Staff Reporter

AMMAN — A unit of the Armed Forces left for Sarajevo to serve in the U.N. peacekeeping force in former Yugoslavia where the unit's soldiers will operate advanced U.S. radar stations and equipment to trace artillery, the Jordan News Agency, Petra, said.

The dispatch of the unit, the latest Jordanian group to join the U.N. force in former Yugoslavia, came after the U.S. Defence Department announced in Washington that it was leasing counter-battery radars to the U.N. for use in Bosnia-Herzegovina.

Defence department spokeswoman Kathleen deLaski said the lease of the three AN/TPQ-36 counter-artillery radars and two AN/TPQ-37 counter-mortar radars will be for a period of 10 months. But she indicated that the \$1.2-million contract "could be renewed."

These radars are used to pinpoint the source of incoming artillery and mortar fire. She said a 60-person detachment of Jordanians assigned to the U.N. Protection Force (UNPROFOR) will operate the radars in Bosnia after completing a refresher training course in Germany offered by U.S. military personnel.

The equipment and operators are expected to be operational in Bosnia in about 20 days, according to Ms. deLaski. The location of the radars will be up to UNPROFOR officials, she said.

Asked if any other U.S. equipment will be sent to Bosnia, the spokeswoman said, "nothing else is in the works right now."

Meanwhile, His Royal Highness Crown Prince Hassan on Wednesday con-

cluded a visit to former Yugoslavia. The Crown Prince's last stop was in Croatia, where he also began the visit on Monday.

The Crown Prince met with some of the 3,000 Jordanian securitymen serving with the U.N. force. On Tuesday, Prince Hassan visited Sarajevo and held a meeting with Bosnian President Alija Izetbegovic.

Earlier the Crown Prince met with Croatian President Franjo Tudjman, Yasushi Akashi, the U.N. special envoy to the former Yugoslavia, and the new UNPROFOR commander, General Bertrand de Lapresle.

Prince Hassan was accompanied on the visit by His Royal Highness Prince Abdullah Ben Al Hussein and Minister of State for Foreign Affairs Talal Al Hassan.

IAEA: N. Korea refused Yongbyon checks

VIENNA (R) — The International Atomic Energy Agency (IAEA) said on Wednesday North Korea refused to let inspectors carry out some checks at one of its nuclear sites at Yongbyon. "As a result of this rejection... the agency (is) not in a position to verify that there had been no diversion of nuclear material at the facility," an IAEA statement said. "Although many of the agreed inspection measures were carried out as envisaged, other important measures which had been agreed were refused at the radiochemical laboratory in Yongbyon," the statement said. The IAEA, an arm of the United Nations, said it had called a meeting of its board of governors next Monday to discuss North Korea. A six-man team of inspectors returned on Tuesday from a trip to North Korea to inspect seven of the Stalinist state's declared nuclear plants and briefed agency chiefs on Wednesday. Detailed results of the two-week inspection trip would have to await follow-up analysis in Vienna, the statement added.

Aziz lobbies Security Council members

UNITED NATIONS (Agencies) — Iraq's Deputy Prime Minister Tariq Aziz was meeting individual Security Council members Wednesday in a bid to convince them to lift oil sanctions against his country this year.

Mr. Aziz, officially in New York for high-level technical talks with U.N. arms officials, was seeking assurances the council will ease or lift sanctions if Iraq continues to comply with U.N. weapons demands, diplomats said.

France's ambassador, Jean-Bernard Merimee, the current council president, said Mr. Aziz had not asked for a full meeting but was seeing ambassadors individually.

The United States, which has the most hardline position on the council, was expected to reject any direct talks with Mr. Aziz, as U.S. Ambassador Madeleine Albright did last time he was in New York late last year.

An Iraqi newspaper Wednesday demanded that the Security Council lift the sanctions.

The daily Al Junhouriya said Baghdad had fulfilled all its obligations to dismantle weapons of mass destruction.

Despite this, the Security Council had not fulfilled its own obligation to remove the sanctions, the newspaper added. It dubbed this a "dangerous game."

Russia is pushing the council to acknowledge Iraqi cooperation with U.N. weapons inspectors when it renews sanctions against the Baghdad government Friday.

A senior Russian diplomat, speaking on condition of anonymity, said Tuesday in New York that Moscow was not seeking an easing or lifting of the sanctions, in effect since Iraq's invasion of Kuwait in August 1990.

But Russia does want the council to be more objective and note publicly that Iraq has

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Stage set for Sudan peace talks

By P.V. Vivekanand Jordan Times Staff Reporter

NAIROBI (R) — Sudan's military president met his Kenyan counterpart in Nairobi on Wednesday on the eve of talks with southern Sudanese rebels to end almost 11 years of civil war in Africa's largest country.

Officials said Kenyan President Daniel Arap Moi welcomed Lieutenant General Omar Hassan Al Bashir at Jomo Kenyatta International Airport and they held preparatory talks at the state house.

Ethiopian President Meles Zenawi also flew into Kenya on Wednesday for the peace talks organised by himself and Mr. Moi and the presidents of Eritrea and Uganda, who arrive on Thursday.

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Jordanian bank to reopen Ramallah branch this month

By P.V. Vivekanand Jordan Times Staff Reporter

AMMAN — The Bank of Jordan, the Kingdom's second largest commercial bank, is expected to reopen a branch in Ramallah in the occupied West Bank later this month. It will be the first Jordanian bank to do so in line with agreements that Jordan has reached with the Palestine Liberation Organisation and Israel, officials said Wednesday.

Reports from occupied Jerusalem said the Bank of Jordan received an Israeli licence to reopen the Ramallah branch, and that other Jordanian banks which have also received preliminary licences from the Central Bank of Jordan (CBJ) would soon receive Israeli licences.

A senior CBJ official said the Israeli government, in line with a memorandum of understanding the Bank of Israel signed with the CBJ on Dec. 1, was issuing the licences on a case-by-case basis.

The official, who preferred anonymity, said the CBJ had given the green light to the Bank of Jordan to reopen the Ramallah branch and expected other banks which already have the Central Bank's preliminary approval to receive their Israeli licences soon.

The CBJ issued preliminary approvals in February to five banks to reopen eight branches in the occupied West Bank and Gaza Strip. Apart from the Bank of Jordan, they include the Arab Bank, the Jordan National Bank, the Jordan Gulf Bank and the Arab Land Bank.

Eight Jordanian banks had 31 branches in the West Bank and Gaza Strip when Israel occupied the territories in the 1967 war, prompting the closure of the banks.

One of them, Cairo Amman Bank, was allowed to reopen under strict Israeli control in 1986. Now that bank operates seven branches in the occupied lands, but its functions were mostly limited to those of an exchange house since Israeli preconditions for credit facilities are too cumbersome.

The Dec. 1 Jordan-Israel memo cleared the way for the reopening of all closed branches of Jordanian banks in the occupied territories and for their operations under the rules and regulations set by CBJ rather than the Bank of Israel as was the case with Cairo-Amman.

Officials have said the CBJ role in the banking and monetary affairs was warranted since the Jordanian dinar will be in circulation in the occupied territories and it was up to the Palestinians to decide what would be their "legal tender."

Officials at these banks said they expected soon to follow the Bank of Jordan in reopening one branch each in the occupied territories.

Mohammad Ali Ibrahim, deputy chairman of the Bank of Jordan, told the Jordan News Agency, Petra, that Bank of Jordan Chairman Fayez Abul Aynain was in the occupied West Bank to supervise the reopening of the Ramallah branch next week.

Yahya Kadamani, a member of the Bank of Jordan board of directors, was quoted as saying in occupied Jerusalem that the bank hoped to reopen eight other branches in the West Bank and Gaza Strip in the next few months to offer commercial loans and finance housing projects.

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The Cairo-Amman Bank will now shed its linkage with the Bank of Israel and come under the direct supervision and control of the CBJ.

All reopened branches of Jordanian banks are now only obliged to send monthly returns to the Bank of Israel.

Zeev Abeles, supervisor of banks at the Bank of Israel, was quoted as saying by Reuters that "there will not be limits on what kind of banking business" that the reopened branches could conduct.

Yoav Lehman, a spokesman for the Israeli central bank, told the Associated Press: "We see the banks as a very crucial element in promoting the local economy of the (occupied) territories, both in generating investments and enhancing the standard of living."

The CBJ official was non-committal when asked whether Jordan favoured quick reopening of all branches of the Kingdom's commercial banks in the West Bank and Gaza Strip closed since 1967.

Other officials have said that Jordan favoured a gradual reopening of the branches, starting with one or two in the initial phase.

"There is a process and procedures for reopening the branches and we will follow them," said the official.

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هكذا عندنا الأصل

Bomb defused at east Beirut school

BEIRUT (Agencies) — Army sappers defused a bomb at a school in Christian east Beirut on Wednesday, the latest in a series of bombings or attempted bombings in Christian areas of Lebanon, security sources said.

The device was a wired 60-mm mortar bomb wrapped as a gift and placed at the entrance of the Taraqqi (progress) school. It was the second bomb dismantled in Beirut in a week.

Last Wednesday police dismantled a six-kilogramme bomb wrapped as a gift and left at the entrance to the French Cultural Centre in the Christian port of Jounieh.

On Feb. 27 a bomb made of two wired 82-mm mortar bombs exploded in a Jounieh church, killing 10 people and wounding about 60.

The bombing campaign has caused alarm in Lebanon, particularly among the influential Christian minority, and the government said on Tuesday 127 people had been arrested in connection with the attacks.

"People are getting really scared. I even feel afraid to leave my house most of the time," said a Christian customer-relations officer for a foreign company.

The government said the 127 suspects were arrested in various parts of the country, including Palestinian refugee camps.

In the southern port of Sidon, army explosives experts dismantled on Tuesday night a 300-gramme explosive charge in a tape recorder placed in front of a car showroom, security sources said.

Many military checkpoints have been reinforced as part of security measures to counter the bombing campaign and

troops and police and guarding mosques and churches on holy days.

Despite the security measures, a hand grenade exploded near the British embassy in east Beirut on Sunday causing minor damage. Another grenade exploded on Monday near a restaurant in an Armenian suburb of the capital.

In December a truck-bomb wrecked the Falange Party headquarters in east Beirut, killing three people and wounding 130.

Authorities have not yet named any suspects but Prime Minister Rafik Al Hariri stressed Tuesday that tight security measures would continue "until the terrorism and sabotage networks and elements threatening the country's security are uncovered," a cabinet statement said.

It did not make clear if those rounded up were linked to the church bombing but said the security meeting discussed investigations into the blast and "the resulting arrests and raids on suspects and those accused of (previous) bombings."

Criminals pardoned after the 1975-90 civil war under a general amnesty for war crimes will be kept under surveillance and may be "pursued for all the crimes they have committed including those covered by the amnesty," the statement added.

Lebanon's official National News Agency quoted security officials as saying there were about 600 people in Lebanon "who worked in the field of explosives," for militias that ruled the country by the gun until they were disbanded in 1990.

U.S. gunship crash kills 7; six survive

NAIROBI (AP) — Seven crewmen who died when a U.S. Air Force gunship crashed off Kenya might have tried to parachute too late, U.S. military officials said.

Lieutenant-Colonel Mike Gannon, speaking from the scene, said six crew survived, including three who stayed in the Spectre gunship when it ditched in the Indian Ocean late Monday 120 kilometres north of Mombasa and just 180 metres offshore.

Army Colonel Steve Rausch, a U.S. spokesman in Mogadishu, said the AC-130H gunship had taken off minutes earlier from Mombasa's Moi international airport for a surveillance mission.

Some parachutes, found floating in the sea, had been opened, indicating the dead crewmen might have attempted to jump when the aircraft was too low over the water, Col. Gannon said.

Crewmen do not normally wear parachutes in the crowded aircraft and would have needed time to put them on and make their way to emergency exits, Col. Gannon said. By the time some did, he said the plane may have been so low there wasn't enough time for the parachutes to deploy.

The names of all 14 crewmembers were withheld pending notification of their families. The plane and its crew were from the air force's 16th Special Operations Squadron, based at Hurlburt Field in Florida.

The survivors were in good condition, Col. Gannon said. Three were flown to a hospital on a U.S. Navy ship off Mogadishu and three were taken to Mombasa.

Col. Rausch said preliminary indications pointed to engine failure as the cause of the crash. He said no distress call was heard from the stricken plane in either Mombasa or Mogadishu.

The pilot attempted to ditch the aircraft in the sea, said Col. Gannon.

Three splashed ashore through a snake-infested lagoon towards the lights of a seaside hotel. Three others were injured but picked up by the Korean trawler Aldria Eight.

"The crew reported there was an explosion — we don't know whether it was an engine or not — and they were going to have to ditch the aircraft," Col. Gannon said.

The gunship had just taken off from Mombasa for a two-hour flight to Mogadishu before a six-hour patrol protecting U.S. forces withdrawing from Somalia.

It was the worst incident involving U.S. forces in Somalia since 18 U.S. soldiers were killed in battles in Mogadishu on Oct. 3 with warlord Mohammed Farah Aidid's militiamen.

"It is always a tragedy when a plane goes down especially towards the end of a mission but there is still a mission and that mission will continue," said Col. Gannon, adding that the remaining three gunships would continue night flights over Mogadishu until the U.S. withdrawal is completed.

Witnesses said fire streamed from the rear of the plane shortly before it plunged into the sea.

Moscow pursues Mideast comeback

MOSCOW (R) — Russia, stepping back firmly into the drive for peace in the Middle East, said on Tuesday the leaders of two main protagonists, Israel and the Palestine Liberation Organisation (PLO), would separately visit Moscow next month.

Viktor Gokitidze, deputy head of the Foreign Ministry's Middle East Department, told a news conference PLO leader Yasser Arafat and Israeli Prime Minister Yitzhak Rabin had both accepted invitations from President Boris Yeltsin.

Mr. Gokitidze said the PLO chairman had been invited to come to Moscow on April 19 and Mr. Rabin on April 24-26.

"The invitations were accepted with gratitude and we... consider that on these dates we will receive the leaders of the PLO and Israel in Moscow," he said.

If Mr. Rabin's visit comes off, it will be the first visit of an Israeli leader to Moscow since the reestablishment of diplomatic ties in the dying days of the Soviet Union.

The United States and Moscow co-sponsored the historic Madrid forum in 1991 which initiated the Israeli-Arab negotiations. But since then Russia has effectively ignored the Middle East, at least publicly.

But last week Foreign Minister Andrei Kozyrev paid a lightning visit to Israel and Tunis, where he met Mr. Arafat, to press the two sides to resume negotiations, on implementing the PLO-Israel peace deal signed in Washington last September.

The negotiations, intended to lead to Palestinian self-rule in parts of the West Bank and the Gaza Strip, stopped after a Jewish settler massacred about 60 Palestinian worshippers in a Hebron mosque on Feb. 25.

Mr. Gokitidze, who accompanied Mr. Kozyrev, said that both the PLO and Israel were ready to resume peace talks.

"We saw that both Israeli and Palestinians are ready to resume (the) peace process," he said.

Moscow is clearly trying to use its Soviet heritage — close ties with the PLO — to boost its world image and back its increasingly assertive foreign policy.

In former Yugoslavia, Moscow is using its special relations with fellow-orthodox Serbs to highlight its own role in efforts to stop bloodshed there.

"We are able to do some things better. Other things they (the United States) can do better," Mr. Gokitidze said.

"We have always worked closer with the PLO... I am sure that the PLO leader and our friends in its leadership have a certain level of trust in us because of personal contacts."

He said Mr. Arafat wanted to link the resumption of talks to the adoption of a U.N. Security Council resolution denouncing the Hebron killings.

"We said we fully shared concerns of the Palestinians and that this resolution should be passed without any delay. The resolution is an effective measure to unblock the situation and promote talks," the Russian diplomat said.

U.S. envoy Dennis Ross and Mr. Arafat met on Tuesday in Tunis but PLO officials said the meeting failed to achieve a breakthrough because the U.S. envoy could not give sufficient commitments on security measures for Palestinians in occupied territories.



An Israeli soldier threatens a Palestinian woman in the Jabalya camp in the occupied Gaza Strip (AFP photo)

Israel prepared to accelerate talks with PLO, Rabin says

WASHINGTON (USIA) — Israeli Prime Minister Yitzhak Rabin says his government is anxious to resume peace talks with the Palestine Liberation Organisation (PLO).

Despite the Feb. 25 massacre in a West Bank mosque by an extremist Jewish settler, "there can be no departure from the course of negotiation with the Palestinians," Mr. Rabin said in a March 15 address to the American-Israeli Public Affairs Committee (AIPAC).

"It is time to get back to the negotiating table," Mr. Rabin said on an official two-day visit to Washington, during which he was scheduled to meet with President Bill Clinton, Secretary of State Warren Christopher, Defence Secretary William Perry and other U.S. officials.

Addressing AIPAC, Mr. Rabin once again condemned the February attack on Muslim worshippers in Hebron. "This murder is foreign to Judaism — and has shamed the Jewish people and Zionism," he said.

The prime minister also pointed out that attacks have taken the lives of 33 Israelis and wounded "hundreds" more since the Sept. 13 signing of the Israel-PLO declaration of principles.

"In spite of these, we, the Israeli government, stood firm in our position that 'we will fight terrorism on the one hand, we will continue the peace negotiations on the other,'" Mr. Rabin said. "And I believe this should be the main message, especially today, as the terrorist attacks continue and blood continues to be shed."

Following are excerpts from Mr. Rabin's prepared remarks:

We are destined to live together, Arabs and Jews, in Israel and in the territories — although fanatics from both sides may from time to time stage attacks in an attempt to destroy this reality. The truth, however, must be said: We Israelis have suffered more, much more, from terrorist violence. But we also recognise the pain of the Palestinians. All human agony, all suffering, is close to our hearts.

There is no difference between the tears of bereaved mothers.

It is possible that the villain who pulled the murderous trigger may not have been insane

in the clinical sense, but the terrible act was that of someone deranged, and in our hearts we have only deep contempt for his vicious act. In fact, almost the entire Knesset, coalition and opposition alike, united in condemning the murder.

This murder is foreign to Judaism — and has shamed the Jewish people and Zionism.

At the same time, we cannot forget the murderous bloody acts of terrorist fanatics who shot Jewish worshippers who stood in prayer in the synagogues of Istanbul, Paris, Amsterdam and Rome. The same denunciation should have been expressed by the Arab parties; however, most remained silent.

We are proud of our democracy; there are few like it in the world. Every citizen of Israel has the right to express his opinion in a democratic way, to oppose or to support the government's policy. There are those who claim that our democratic system is weaker than other systems of government in the world. I say to them we will defend democracy and its principles. Indeed, we have already taken significant legal steps against extremists, to achieve exactly that.

This past Sunday, the government outlawed these groups, a very unusual but necessary step.

We will not allow anyone in the state of Israel, or in the territories, no matter who he may be or what position he holds, to determine or change the policy of government — any government — through blackmail of the trigger or false messianic claims.

I must clarify to our Palestinian partners: The feeling of loss and sorrow in the wake of the Hebron tragedy will not change our fundamental positions regarding the security of the state of Israel and its citizens, including the Jewish residents in Judea, Samaria and the Gaza Strip. We have no intention of compromising on any security matters. Our security is also your security, and the basic guarantee of the success of peace. I say to you today: No bullet, no knife, no Molotov cocktail, no stone, will undermine our commitment to peace and security. As horrendous as the murder in Hebron was, there can

be no departure from the course of negotiations with the Palestinians. It is time to get back to the negotiating table.

To all those who still have doubts regarding the state of Israel's commitment to peace, I say, in a loud, clear voice: Do not be mistaken. We will continue making peace with the Palestinians on the basis of declaration of principles which was signed in Washington and the Cairo agreement. Indeed, we are ready to accelerate the talks and the contacts and the negotiations. Indeed, we are working on it during this very day, with the assistance of the U.S. administration.

I believe that we are near the conclusion of the Gaza-Jericho stage in the negotiations for peace. We already see the finish line. A little more effort, and we will begin to lay the actual foundations of peace for our children — ours and the Palestinians. We have no other path, only that of peace.

As you know, President Clinton met with President Assad in Geneva in January. Out of this event came signs of hope that we intend to explore carefully in order to be sure that Syria genuinely means to achieve the kind of peace and security we are looking for. A peace that would last for generations to come, a peace that would put an end to sufferings, plight and fear. Our negotiations with Syria have been serious. I call upon President Assad and the Syrian people, as well as the King of Jordan and the President of Lebanon, to join us and invest in our future.

I believe that the near future offers us a rare window of opportunity: The fall of communism, and the collapse of the Soviet Union, which for years supported Arab armies, have created new opportunities. But lately, we see on the horizon forces emerging and threatening our peace. We have no time to waste. It is possible that the window of opportunity is narrower than we thought, at first. Therefore, I have committed myself and my decision should be well calculated, for hasty actions could bring upon us irreversible results. Our enemies — near and far — have not laid down their arms. It is up to us to shoulder the security responsibility for our people.

NEWS IN BRIEF

Bulgaria will not deport Algerians

SOFIA (R) — Bulgaria will not deport four Algerians said to face the death penalty if sent home, the Bulgarian Foreign Ministry said Tuesday. "Four Algerian citizens have arrived in Bulgaria and will not be deported to Algeria," Deputy Foreign Minister Dimitar Ikonov told Reuters. "We have made contacts with the U.N. High Commissioner for Refugees (UNHCR)," he said, but declined further details. Bulgarian government officials said the four were arrested at Sofia airport on Tuesday afternoon having arrived from Morocco via Vienna with irregular documents. Jacques Vergès, a French lawyer, appealed to Bulgaria not to deport Mohammed Benallouche, Lehcene Ouahabi, Daoud Akane and Djamel Hamez, who he said had been sentenced to death by military courts in Algeria. He said the four had been threatened with expulsion to Algeria by Sofia. "This expulsion would be contrary to the European declaration on human rights. These are political offenders sentenced by special courts," Mr. Vergès said in a letter to the Bulgarian ambassador in Paris. Mr. Vergès, an outspoken lawyer who once represented Algeria's National Liberation Front, has recently acted for Algerian Muslim fundamentalists arrested in France.

Greece opposes Turkish force in Bosnia

ATHENS (AP) — Greece said Tuesday that it was lobbying diplomatically to prevent traditional rival Turkey from sending peacekeeping troops to the former Yugoslavia. Greece has repeatedly expressed its opposition to Balkan countries providing peacekeepers, saying that this could increase tensions in the region. The Turkish Ottoman empire ruled over the Balkans for nearly 400 years, and both Greece and Serbia fought bitter wars of independence against it early last century. Greece and Serbia are Orthodox Christian and are traditional allies. Turkey's population is Muslim. "The region needs less tension, and the presence of military forces from countries with an historical connection does not help lessen tension. It increases tension. So Greece at this time is making all the necessary diplomatic steps," government spokesman Evangelos Venizelos said. He said that diplomatic notes had been sent to the United Nations "and countries playing a role in the whole process." But Mr. Venizelos offered to send troops to Bosnia. "It has not been decided to send Turkish forces, and the sending of Turkish forces must be prevented," he told reporters.

Farmer in hospital after trying TV stunt

CAIRO (AP) — A 22-year-old farmer landed in a hospital on Tuesday after he jumped out of a fifth-storey window in an attempt to imitate a television stunt. The man, identified as Samir Mohammed Ahmad, was being treated for severe internal bleeding in Aswan in southern Egypt. Al Gomhuria daily reported. A stunt man last week successfully performed such a jump on the popular Egyptian television show "Talk of Gold." The show's host had warned viewers against trying to copy the act. Aswan is a major tourist centre in southern Egypt, some 700 kilometres south of Cairo.

Mine explosion kills 3 in Iran

NICOSIA (AP) — Three nomads were killed and four wounded when mines left over from the Iran-Iraq war exploded in western Iran, the Islamic Republic News Agency (IRNA) reported Tuesday. The state-run news agency, monitored in Nicosia, said the explosions occurred Monday near Dehloran in Ilam province, which borders Iraq. IRNA quoted an unidentified law enforcement official as saying the victims were collecting remnants of the 1980-88 war when the mines went off. IRNA said the incident was one of several in the past few months in which nomads were killed or wounded by explosives in no-entry zones in the area. At least one million people died or were injured in the Iran-Iraq war, the longest conventional interstate war of this century.

Bomb attack kills one in Istanbul

ISTANBUL (AP) — One person was killed and 13 others were injured in a grenade attack against a restaurant Tuesday, police said. An underground group, the Islamic Great East Raiders Front, claimed responsibility for the attack in phone calls to newspapers. A Molotov cocktail was hurled inside the restaurant in downtown Fatih district, a Muslim fundamentalist residential area. The restaurant is one of the few places in the district which offers alcoholic beverages. Two previous attacks against the same restaurant over the past few months were also believed to be carried out by radicals.

3 Israelis killed in overpass collapse

TEL AVIV (R) — Three Israeli motorists were killed on Wednesday when a concrete slab fell on a busy highway from an overpass being repaired during the morning rush hour, police said. "We are calling it a tragic work accident," Benny Kanyak, a police spokesman, said about the incident on the main Jerusalem-Tel Aviv highway. He told army radio the slab had been fitted to the overpass near Tel Aviv's Ben-Gurion airport a week ago and fell during fresh repair work on Wednesday. "The collapse of the slab... caused the death of three people — two in a car that drove under the overpass and one who apparently was on the bridge and was killed as a result of a fall," Mr. Kanyak said.

Guerrillas fire rocket at Israeli patrol

MARJAYOUN (AP) — Guerrillas mounted a rocket attack Tuesday on an Israeli patrol near a crusader castle in South Lebanon, but caused no casualties, security sources said. A projectile missed the patrol and hit a water reservoir that feeds the hilltop Amoun village at the central sector of a self-styled "security zone" Israel occupies in South Lebanon, the sources said. The sources said Israeli tanks pounded for 15 minutes following the evening attack on an area controlled by Hizbollah from where the rocket was suspected to have been fired.

JORDAN TELEVISION

Tel. 773111-19

PROGRAMME TWO

17:30 Taratara
19:00 News in French
19:15 Rencontres
19:30 News in Hebrew
20:00 News in Arabic
20:30 Flash And Blood
21:10 De Beir's Dr
22:00 News in English
22:20 Film: "Living A Lie"

PRAYER TIMES

04:24 Fajr
05:41 (Sunrise) Dhuhr
11:44 Dhuhr
15:09 'Asr
17:47 Maghreb
19:04 'Isha

CHURCHES

St. Mary of Nazareth Church Swedieh, Tel. 810740
Assemblies of God Church, Tel. 637783
St. Joseph Church Tel. 624590
Church of the Annunciation Tel. 732491
St. Saba Church Tel. 641757
Church of the Annunciation Tel. 637783
Church of the Annunciation Tel. 630851, Tel. 1743

Armenian Catholic Church Tel. 771331

Armenian Orthodox Church Tel. 775261

St. Ephraim Church Tel. 771751

Armenian International Church Tel. 652526

Evangelical Lutheran Church Tel. 824328

German-speaking Evangelical Congregation Tel. 684195

The Church of Jesus Christ of Latter-Day Saints Tel. 654932

Church of Nazareth Tel. 675691

The Evangelical Local Church in Amman Tel. 811295

WEATHER

Bulletin supplied by the Department of Meteorology

Temperatures will continue their consistent rise with winds becoming easterly light to moderate. In Amman, fine weather conditions will prevail and winds will be northerly moderate and seas calm.

Min./max. temp.

Amman 11/18

Amman 11/25

Amman 11/25

Amman 11/25

Amman 11/25

Amman 11/25

Amman 11/25

Amman 11/25

Amman 11/25

JORDAN TIMES DAILY GUIDE AND CALENDAR

Amman 38 per cent, Aqaba 34 per cent.

USEFUL TELEPHONE NUMBERS

NIGHT DUTY

AMMAN:
Dr. Mukhlis Mazahra 630425
Dr. Nasser Ibrahim 831099
Dr. Mohammed Al Izza 752971
Dr. Mohammed Al Nahaw 819213
Firas pharmacy 661912
Ferdous pharmacy 77832
Al Asra pharmacy 637055
Nairook pharmacy 623672
Al Salam pharmacy 636730
Yacoub pharmacy 644945
Shamsi pharmacy 637660
Najib pharmacy 847632

IRBID:
Dr. Fayez Al Odi 248743
Al Oud pharmacy (—)

KHAYMA:
Dr. Fayez Al Odi 248743
Al Oud pharmacy (—)

KHAYMA:
Dr. Fayez Al Odi 248743
Al Oud pharmacy (—)

KHAYMA:
Dr. Fayez Al Odi 248743
Al Oud pharmacy (—)

KHAYMA:
Dr. Fayez Al Odi 248743
Al Oud pharmacy (—)

KHAYMA:
Dr. Fayez Al Odi 248743
Al Oud pharmacy (—)

EMERGENCIES

Civil Defence Department 661111
Civil Defence Immediate 661111
Rescue 630341
Civil Defence Emergency 199
Rescue Police 192, 621111, 637777
Fire Brigade 891228
Blood Bank 75121
Highway Police 843402
Traffic Police 809380
Public Security Department 630321
Hotel Complaints 608960
Price Complaints 661176
Water and Sewerage 661176

Complaints 897467

Amman Municipality 787111

Telephone Information 121

Overseas Calls 010230

Central Amman Telephone 623101

Repairs 623101

Abdali Telephone Repair 661101

Jordan Television 773111

Radio Jordan 773111

Water Authority 640109

Jordan Electricity 640109

Electric Power 640109

Company 640109

RJ Flight Information 08-53240

Queen Alia Int. Airport 08-53200

HOSPITALS

AMMAN:
Hussein Medical Centre 81381332
Khaldil Maternity, J. Amn 642816
Al-Khalil Maternity, J. Amn 6424412
Jabal Amman Maternity 642362
Najib, J. Amman 642362
Taleen, Amman 642362
Shamsi Hospital 642362
University Hospital 642362
Al-Musaid Hospital 6612279
The Islamic, Abdali 6641646
Al-Ahli, Abdali 6641646
Italian, Al-Musaid 7771013
Al-Bashir, J. Ashrafieh 7511176
Army, Marka 8916115
Queen Alia Hospital 60224050
Amal Hospital 674155

ZARQA:
Zarqa Hospital 021963323

Zarqa National Hospital 021963323

Ilm Sina Hospital 021963323

Al-Musaid Maternity 021963323

Al-Musaid Maternity 021963323

Al-Musaid Maternity 021963323

Al-Musaid Maternity 021963323

Al-Musaid Maternity 021963323

Al-Musaid Maternity 021963323

Al-Musaid Maternity 021963323

AKABA:
Princess Haya Hospital 03134111

FOR THE TRAVELLER

QUEEN ALIA INTERNATIONAL AIRPORT

This information is supplied by Royal Jordanian (RJ) Information Department at the Queen Alia International Airport

UNRWA opens women's legal consultancy, production unit in Wihdat refugee camp

AMMAN (J.T.) — The United Nations Relief and Work Agency (UNRWA) Wednesday opened a women's legal consultancy office at Al Wihdat refugee camp, south-east of Amman.

The office's establishment costs were covered by a \$16,500 German donation allocated for two legal consultancy offices and the salary of a woman lawyer who will supervise the two offices for one year.

The office will be run by three volunteers from the camp, while legal advice will be offered by six lawyers, each of whom will work at the office one day a week. A nominal fee of JD 0.500 for each consultancy will be charged in order to provide some financial support to the office.

The inauguration ceremony was attended by several members of the German diplomatic mission in Amman, lawyer Asma Khader who will be supervising the work of the office, senior UNRWA officials and representatives of women's movements at the refugee camp.

Also Wednesday UNRWA opened a women's production unit at Amman New Camp in Wihdat.

The unit was established to provide job opportunities for the women who graduated from camp's women's programme centre.

The Canadian embassy has donated \$30,000 for the re-



Lawyer Asma Khader Wednesday discusses plans for the new women's legal consultancy services in Wihdat district of Amman with

Counsellor and Deputy Head of Mission of the German Embassy Michael Beck.

novation of an old UNRWA building in the camp and for purchasing knitting and sewing machines and some furniture.

Eleven women who graduated from knitting and sewing courses in the camp are working in this unit.

The inauguration ceremony was held under the patronage of the Canadian Ambassador in Amman Andrew Robinson and was attended by senior UNRWA officials and a large number of camp residents.

Italian experts to offer ideas on boosting Jordan's textile industry

By a Jordan Times Staff Reporter
AMMAN — Jordanian businesspersons will be offered an insight into Italian expertise with a view to picking up ideas to develop the Kingdom's textile industry during a seminar in Amman on Sunday, an Italian diplomat said Wednesday.

Raffaele De Benedictis, commercial secretary at the Italian embassy here, said Italian experts in the various aspects of the textile industry — spinning, weaving and finishing — will give lectures on the subjects during the seminar, held in cooperation with the Amman Chamber of Industry.

Dr. De Benedictis said he expected representatives of at least 100 Jordanian companies to attend the symposium, which will also be addressed by Minister of Industry and Trade Rima Khalaf.

"It is an opportunity for all interested Jordanians to learn about the experiences and technologies of the Italian textile industry, including machinery," Dr. De Benedictis told the Jordan Times.

According to the diplomat and Jordanian industrialists, there is a large scope for developing Jordan's textile industry, both in producing cloth as garments for local consumption and exports.

The Kingdom's imports of textile-related products (yarn, fibres, fabrics as well as ready-made garments) totalled nearly JD 120 mil-

lion in 1992, while its exports in the same category totalled JD 25 million. Figures for 1993 were not immediately available.

Jordan produced 1.037 million metres of textiles and spun 1.51 tonnes of yarn during 1992. No figures were available on ready-made garment production.

Clothes and textiles are given a 1.6 per cent share in Jordan's industrial production index. The index, set on a base of 100 and calculated on 1979 production, rose from 118.9 points to 128.5 points in 1993 — a nine per cent growth.

Jordan is exempt from the textile export quotas that many western countries have set. As such, other countries with high production capacities, but with limited export quotas, could take advantage of the Kingdom's status to expand their exports.

However, the full potential that the Kingdom offers to textile and ready-made garment producers and exporters has not been fully exploited, businesspersons say.

There are several joint ventures between Italian and Jordanian manufacturers in the textile industry. The latest of them is El-Zay, a collaboration between a local business group and Italy's GFT. The company's administrative staff and technicians are currently undergoing training in Italy.

The \$8.5 million company, expected to go on stream later this year, will mainly produce men's suits. Dr. De



A textile manufacturing plant in Jordan (File photo)

Benedictis said a good part of the output could be exported to Italy, which has access to other members of the European Union (EU) under common EU agreements.

Dr. De Benedictis said Sunday's seminar will offer details of Italian technologies as well as various types of textile machinery the country can offer in all areas of the industry — spinning, weaving, knitting, hosiery, dyeing, printed, finishing etc. — and for every kind of fibre — cotton, linen, other vegetable fibres, wool, silk and synthetics.

The seminar is a joint project of the Italian Institute for Foreign Trade and the Italian Association for Textile Machinery Producers (ACI-MIT).

"The purpose of the symposium is to put the experiences and the technologies of the Italian textile machinery producers at the disposal of the recovery, expansion and future development of the Jordanian textile industry," a press release from the Italian embassy said.

The seminar will be held at the Amman Chamber of Industry.

Holiday accidents claim 12 lives in Kingdom

By Rana Hussein
Special to the Jordan Times

AMMAN — Accidents over the 'Eid Al Fitr claimed the lives of 12 people in different parts of the Kingdom, according to the Civil Defence and Public Security Departments.

Over the three days of the holiday (Sunday through Tuesday), seven children were run over by cars; five of them died as a result of their injuries. By comparison, during the first 13 days of March, road accidents killed three children; three others were listed in critical condition.

A police officer said the number of casualties in accidents during this year's 'Eid was lower than last year. He did not give figures.

The officer, who preferred anonymity, said most of the

accidents resulted from carelessness of children playing in the streets during the holidays.

Four adults were also killed in this week's accidents, according to the civil defence and police reports.

A 42-year-old man, Jamal Abdul Hamid, was struck down and killed by a speeding bus while changing a flat tyre on his car in the Baten Al Ghoul area, a police statement said. The statement said the man had just returned after performing Umra in Saudi Arabia.

Two others, aged 17 and 24, were killed in separate road accidents when they lost control of their vehicles, police said.

In the Abdoun district, a 35-year-old woman was run over and killed by a motorist, who, police said, failed to

yield the right of way to pedestrians.

In Ramtha, a 10-month-old child, Sulaiman Zoubi, was electrocuted at home when he touched an open switch, police said.

An 18-year-old Egyptian worker, Sayed Al Sayed, died in Amman when a metal pole lifted by a crane accidentally fell on him.

Also in Amman, police found the badly burned body of a 32-year-old man, identified only as B.A., at his house. No details were available on the nature of the incident. A forensic report said the man had died of third degree burns.

The Civil Defence Department (CDD) responded to 441 emergencies during the 'Eid, including 325 calls for first aid, 38 fire alarms and 28 rescue operations, the de-

partment said. CDD Public Relations Director Abdul Raouf Ma'ayah said there was a high number of fires during the holiday.

Captain Ma'ayah said most fires were caused by children lighting firecrackers to celebrate the 'Eid.

"Most calls we responded to resulted from firecrackers children had lit, which set several houses on fire," Capt. Ma'ayah told the Jordan Times.

The Jordan News Agency, Petra, said 887 people reported to Jerash hospital for treatment during 'Eid Al Fitr.

It quoted hospital director Samir Tarazi as saying 137 of the 887 people were admitted to the hospital, where the bed occupancy rate during that period rose to 84 per cent.

WHAT'S GOING ON

EXHIBITIONS

- ★ Book exhibition at the Safeway International.
- ★ "Permanent" exhibition of 54 Arab contemporary artists at Darat Al Funun of the Abdul Hameed Shoman Foundation in Jabal Lweibdeh (Tel. 643251/2).
- ★ Art exhibition by several Iraqi and Jordanian artists at Orfali Art Gallery (Tel. 826932).

FILM

- ★ Film entitled "The Honkytonk Man" at the American Center on Thursday at 5:00 p.m. (125 minutes).

DIALOGUE AND MUSIC

- ★ An evening of dialogue and music with lute player Munir Bashir on Thursday at the Royal Cultural Centre at 8:30 p.m.

CULTURAL DISCUSSION

- ★ Cultural discussion in Arabic entitled "Women and the Jordanian Short Story" on Thursday at the Royal Cultural Centre at 6:00 p.m.

DRAMA

- ★ Drama in Arabic entitled "The Question" at the Royal Cultural Centre on Friday at 4:00 p.m.



A buyer at the Jordanian pavilion at the 1994 International Green Week exhibit in Berlin gets ready to make a

purchase of Jordanian fresh produce (Photo by IN/M. Leib)

HOME NEWS IN BRIEF

King receives thanks from Hebron imam

AMMAN (Petra) — His Majesty King Hussein Wednesday received a cable from Hamed Abdeen, the imam of Hebron and a member of the Islamic Scholars (Ulamas) Committee, thanking him for his compassion for the people of Hebron. Sheikh Abdeen expressed gratitude and appreciation for King Hussein's support to the people of Hebron during their suffering after the massacre of Muslim worshippers at the Ibrahim mosque on Feb. 25. King Hussein had donated JD 100,000 to the families of the victims of the Hebron massacre and issued instructions to the hospitals in Jordan to offer victims advanced treatment in the Kingdom's hospitals. Two massacre victims have already been admitted to hospitals here. A third patient is expected to arrive in Jordan Thursday. A higher national committee was formed to raise funds for families of the victims. The committee transferred the first part of contributions before the Eid. It will meet Saturday under the chairmanship of Chief Islamic Justice Sheikh Izzeddin Al Khatib Al Tamimi to discuss transferring additional amounts to these families. Also Wednesday King Hussein sent a cable to Syrian President Hafez Al Assad condoling him over the death of Ahmad Samir Dabbas, the Syrian charge d'affaires in Amman. Mr. Dabbas died of a heart attack Tuesday in Amman. His Majesty received a cable from Bahraini Crown Prince Sheikh Hamad Bin Issa Al Khalifeh, congratulating him on 'Eid Al Fitr and wishing him continued good health and happiness and the people of Jordan further progress and prosperity.

Panel meets on draft medical insurance law

AMMAN (Petra) — Health Minister Abdul Rahim Malhas Wednesday chaired a meeting of the Comprehensive Medical Insurance Committee to discuss the draft medical insurance law and 11 regulations attached to it. The 11 regulations cover all sectors of society. The committee decided to meet daily to finalise the draft law and regulations before submitting it to the Cabinet for endorsement.

Guest worker replacement discussed

AMMAN (Petra) — Labour Minister Khalid Al Ghazawi Wednesday discussed with the president and members of the General Association of Owners of Beauty Salons replacing the guest labour force with Jordanians. Mr. Ghazawi stressed the

ministry's interest in implementing the labour law in this respect and praised the efforts of the association in providing training opportunities to Jordanians to prepare them to replace the non-Jordanian labour force. The minister stressed the importance of enhancing coordination in the field of training between the association and the Vocational Training Corporation (VTC).

Masri meets UAE counterpart

ABU DHABI (Petra) — Speaker of the Lower House of Parliament Taher Masri Wednesday discussed with his United Arab Emirates (UAE) counterpart Al Haj Ben Abdullah Al Muhetbi scopes of bilateral cooperation in various fields. The two officials also discussed the contribution both houses can make to strengthen cooperation and dialogue among Arab parliaments. The speakers also discussed means of restoring Arab solidarity and crystallising a strong and united Arab position to counter the challenges facing the Arab nations. Bilateral relations and means of enhancing them were also discussed during the meeting. Mr. Masri had earlier met with the UAE Defence Minister, Gen. Sheikh Mohammad Ben Rashed Al Maktoum, and conveyed to him the greetings of His Majesty King Hussein and His Royal Highness Crown Prince Hassan. Mr. Masri and Gen. Maktoum reviewed issues of mutual interest, including developments in the Middle East peace process. Mr. Masri arrived in Dubai Monday on a private visit to the UAE.

Scientific writing course opens

AMMAN (J.T.) — The International Centre for Agricultural Research in the Dry Areas (ICARDA) Wednesday organised a 9-day regional training course in "Scientific Writing and Data Presentation" at the ICARDA regional office in Amman. Zaid Abdel Hadi, head of computer unit at ICARDA, said the course will improve the quality of the research reports, enhance chances for publication of research results in reference journals, and increase dissemination of research results produced by scientists. The course will cover sections on writing scientific proposals for submission to donor communities for funding. The course was opened by Mahmoud Duwayri, director general of the National Centre for Agricultural Research Technology Transfer (NCARTT) who stressed the importance of such training for the scientists in the region. He indicated that the writing stage and the

publication of the results is found to be the most difficult, but, most important in the agricultural research process. The course is one of a series of training and educational activities ICARDA is conducting through the Mashreq Project which includes training courses in animal production and socio-economics, in addition to study tours and travelling workshops in several countries in the region. The course is attended by 14 scientists from Syria, Jordan and Iraq. Several scientists from ICARDA will lecture and provide the training.

Party issues monthly bulletin

AMMAN (Petra) — The Jordan National Alliance Party has started issuing a monthly bulletin entitled "Sawt Al Urdun" (the voice of Jordan) covering party's activities in all fields. The zero issue of the publications, issued in March, included an editorial by party Secretary General Mijhem Al Khreishah saying that the bulletin is the first step towards the publication of a monthly magazine.

European aerospace team visits RJGC

AMMAN (Petra) — Director General of the Royal Jordanian Geographic Centre (RJGC) Uqlah Dheimat Wednesday briefed a visiting delegation from the European Aerospace Office on the human and technical resources available to the RJGC and its future plans in the area of remote sensing technologies and geographical data systems. The delegation is currently on a tour of several countries in the region which have demonstrated willingness to host a United Nations regional training centre on aerospace sciences and technologies in western Asia.

Teams keep water flowing in Jerash

JERASH (Petra) — Director of Jerash Water Department Abdul Hamid Abu Issa Wednesday said the department has repaired 42 water pipelines in Jerash during 'Eid Al Fitr. Mr. Abu Issa said the department's maintenance teams were working round-the-clock during the holiday to ensure that citizens in Jerash city and the surrounding areas receive their requirements of tap water. The department, he said, had received no complaints of water shortages during the holiday.

The National Music Conservatory/Noor Al Hussein Foundation
and
The Austrian Embassy
In cooperation with
FORTE GRAND Forte Grand Hotel
present
TRIO SCHOLL
(flute, guitar, and violin)
the recital features
Angela Lehner-Wieternick, flute & guitar,
Gundula Scholl, violin
Inge Scholl-Kremmel, guitar
Friday and Saturday, 25 and 26 March 1994 - 8:00 p.m.
Forte Grand Hotel - Al Andalusia
Tickets for JD 7 are available from:
- Forte Grand Hotel, Tel. 698511
- Babiche, Tel. 661322
- The National Music Conservatory, Tel. 687620

Jordan Times

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Oil, debt and power

RUSSIA APPEARS poised to assist Iraq in lifting the ban on its oil exports when the U.N. Security Council takes up the issue of sanctions later this week. Moscow now has a good reason to help Iraq since the Russians seek to expand on their recent claims for a global power role on the heels of recent moves to reassert their presence in the Middle East, the Balkans and Eastern Europe.

Moscow had been a traditional ally of several Arab countries and a prime supplier of weapons and industrial goods. By extending an offer to help beleaguered Iraq, Russia could be in the process of reestablishing traditional contacts with some Middle Eastern capitals in a bid to rekindle its superpower legacy in the region.

Obviously the Kremlin has more than raw political clout on its mind in seeking new ways to regain its lost influence and prestige on the international scene. In the case of Iraq, there is always the question of the some \$6 billion that Baghdad owes Moscow, an amount that the Russian Federation desperately needs to support its stagnant economy. There is no way that Iraq can pay back its national debt to Russia or to any other country unless it is allowed to export oil. Russian President Boris Yeltsin also wants to end his country's humiliation by depending more on trade and commerce with lost markets and less on charity and direct financial aid from the western giants.

Still, Iraq's agonies and tribulations as a result of the continuation of U.N. sanctions imposed in the aftermath of the Gulf crisis and war cannot be expected to end during the upcoming Security Council's debate on the issue. There is now talk about putting Baghdad through a probationary period during which the council would continue to monitor the fulfillment of its obligations under the relevant resolutions, notably 687. But Moscow appears determined to make this additional six months' trial period the beginning of the end of the council's punitive measures. Iraq is always a big prize to win in the renewed big powers' rivalries and the Russian sponsorship of easing pressure on that important country in the area could win an old ally without risking to derail the budding U.S.-Russian partnership in other areas of the world. Yeltsin's cautious challenges to Washington may succeed in regaining for his country some old friends and allies in both the economic and political spheres. The unipolar global scene should not be expected to change to a bipolar world once again, and literally overnight, but the possibility of the emergence of a multi-polar system, including Russia, cannot be discounted either.

Iraq's warning to the Security Council Tuesday, to lift the sanctions or else risk unspecified measures by Baghdad, can be looked at in the context of the new Russian moves in the Middle East. There will not be another Gulf war soon as a result of this warning, we do not think. But the move has to be calculated within the new equation that Russia is trying to work out with the U.S. for the next phase.

ARABIC PRESS COMMENTARIES

AL RA'I daily urged the Arab parties to the peace negotiations with Israel to re-examine the situation in light of the attitudes of the United States and Israel vis-a-vis the occupation and the Jewish settlements issues. The decision has long been taken for obliterating the Arab and Muslim nation and it is this nation's prerogative and right to resist murder by all available means, said the paper. In our negotiations with the Israeli enemy, we have reached the point of near capitulation and surrender, considering the humiliating conditions imposed on us by the U.S.-Israeli alliance, continued the paper. Our mere decision to reconsider our participation in the peace process would likely open the door for the millions of Arab masses to express their wrath and their determination to pursue the holy war and seek revenge for the usurpation of Arab and Muslims rights in retaliation against the atrocities committed against the Arab and Muslim civilians, said the paper. The paper said that this firm Arab stand should be taken in response to Washington's order to the U.N. Security Council to refrain from condemning the massacre at the Hebron mosque. In Washington's view, added the paper, the slaying of Muslims does not impede the peace process; and Washington seems to be demanding from the Palestinians to forgive the murderers for their crime.

A COLUMNIST in Al Dustour said Wednesday that as long as the permanent members of the U.N. Security Council are submissive to Washington's pressure, accepting its influence by the carrot of the stick, no resolution can be expected to end the embargo on Iraq. Mohammad Kawash said no matter how often the Council members meet, the Arab masses are certain that no decision would be passed on lifting the sanctions because Washington does not wish it. The whole world community realises that Baghdad has already implemented all Security Council resolutions and therefore every one expects the Council to lift the embargo, added the writer. Yet Washington sees otherwise and does not want to see an end to the Iraqi people's sufferings, he said. The writer expressed the view that prolonging the embargo further can only complicate the situation and can serve as a time bomb that would blow up at any time.

Reconciling traditionalism with a collective secular identity

By Lu'ayy Minwer Al Rimawi

AT THIS very critical juncture of Jordan's democratic and national development, it is most essential that we, Jordanians, examine our national identity. The real dilemma of Jordanian identity has, so far, resulted largely from the fact that Jordan has been highly exposed to the vicissitudes of Arab politics, which in turn has hampered the crystallisation of a clear-cut Jordanian identity.

Given Jordan's political history and its high susceptibility to external and regional influences, the crystallisation of Jordanian identity is to some degree a hostage to the designs of the concerned external political players—regional and international. The corollary, predictably, is that as long as the region remains turbulent, lacking direction and durable solutions to its manifold crises, Jordanian identity is likely to remain at best, vulnerable. For its part, official nationalism has, understandably, been overwhelmed by events, which in turn meant that its role was to accommodate rather than cast.

National identity, generally, emanates from the identification with a given nation or nation-state. As opposed to other collective identities such as gender, class, etc., national identity (with its unlimited emotional appeal and cultural depth), offers an enduring criterion for collective identity. Sociologists and political scientists have often debated the pros and cons of such a criterion. On the whole, the majority of them have extolled national identity and its modern functional roles. To many of them, it fulfils internal as well as external functions for individuals and communities. Underpinning the state and its organs, together with defining the social space within which members live and work, are among such modern functional roles.

Nationalism, on the other hand, according to one definition, is a theory of "political legitimacy," which re-

quires that the ethnic boundaries should not cut across political ones, and, in particular, that ethnic boundaries within a given state... should not separate the power-holders from the rest." It has also been defined as "an ideological movement for attaining and maintaining autonomy, unity and identity on behalf of a population deemed by some of its members to constitute an actual or potential 'nation'."

As has been the case in most emancipated ex-colonies, Transjordanian identity was territorial. Its boundaries and population were preordained by external non-ethnic factors. Transjordan was incorporated into the Ottoman Empire in 1518 after the Turks won the battle of Aleppo over the Mamluks. Administratively, Transjordan was part of the Vilayet of Syria, which extended as far as Aqaba in the South. Rarely did the Ottomans exercise tight authority over Transjordan, and it was in the 1870s when they imposed more rigid control over its northern parts. The state, which the late King Abdullah established in 1921, institutionalised the concept of centralised authority in a nomadic, semi-agrarian society. But since the process of bureaucratisation was very limited, the army then proved to be a most invaluable instrument for political socialisation.

What is unique about Jordanian identity is its complete novelty or inventiveness. Unlike neighbouring Umayyad Syria, Pharaonic Egypt or Abbasid Iraq, Transjordan's settled regions completely lacked collective cultural and political identities. Transjordan prior 1921 had no collective historic roots on which to draw its national symbols.

Today, however, after little more than 70 years of statehood, the majority of Jordanians share a collective name, a relatively common (albeit very recent collective

history), a fairly shared culture, a strong sense of solidarity (especially when confronted with external threat) and, most importantly, a Jordanian homeland.

With regard to Jordanian national roots, one can convincingly argue that Jordan's national pride comes from the legacy of the Great Arab Revolt, which is viewed by many historians as the first modern expression of Arab nationalism and identity. Indeed, many Western writers on Jordanian nationalism almost unanimously concur that today, His Majesty King Hussein constitutes the most important symbol of Jordanian identity and the "unifying essence" of the state of Jordan. Like other regional identities, however, Jordanian identity has often been adumbrated (and occasionally completely subsumed) by

Nation-state in the Arab World

In Middle Eastern and Arab regions, the nation-state did not develop through a process of social change and the situation was in fact wholly dissimilar to that of Europe. Needless to say, a crucial element is absent from the Arab "nation-state" equation: the industrialisation which demanded the diffusion of common modes of thought and belief throughout entire populations in Europe in the 18th and 19th centuries, coupled with the relentless efforts of the intelligentsia.

Modern Arab states have all joined the present interstate system which largely dates back to the 1648 Treaty of Westphalia. (The Treaty of Westphalia concluded the Thirty Years War and prom-

"With regard to Jordanian national roots, one can convincingly argue that Jordan's national pride comes from the legacy at the Great Arab Revolt, which is viewed by many historians as the first modern expression of Arab nationalism and identity."

Islamic, Arab and tribal identities.

Jordan's population is now almost completely sedentarised in a multi-ethnic society. Education, social mobility and communication have also improved phenomenally, precipitating a drastic decline in the paramountcy of the tribe as the only social reference. However, in spite of the diminution of the significance of the tribe, tribal affiliation and ethos still play a central role in Jordanian society. The central importance of tribal identity is not unique to Jordan, though. Although only 5 per cent of the Arab population is nomadic, a far larger number, however, retains tribal identity. In order, therefore, to have a better understanding of the regional realities, a brief examination of the nation-state in the Arab World is necessary.

otated sovereignty and autonomy as the cornerstones of a new inter-national state system. Since the instalment of Western-style modern Arab states, loyalty to the tribal-religious ties, on the whole, strongly rivalled loyalty to the secular state symbols. Additionally, tribal and sectarian considerations have always been dominant in the political structure in almost all Arab states, which have been no more than instruments for tribal or sectarian hegemony. For example, in spite of much "nationalistic" and "socialistic" rhetoric one can effortlessly discern the clanish manner in which the regimes in Iraq and Syria are running their respective states.

Clearly, a nation-state requires more than the subjugation of tribes and sects by central authority. Indeed, re-

gional realities have, time and again, shown that nationalism can provide no real basis for political entity in the region. But it has also to be admitted that after decades of modern statehood, Arab people have become more accustomed to their territorial states-though territorial claims and counter-claims and disparity in natural resources allocation have all sowed the seeds of destabilisation. However, one can safely say that the territorial Arab state in the region has been "regionalised" in the sense that it has become a hybrid product with its own distinct cultural and historical matrices, and although initially not an indigenous phenomenon no longer seems as a foreign import.

Islam and the nation-state

At the conceptual level, Islam contains notions that can be seen as obstacles to the establishment of civic nations in which nationalism is tantamount to a "secular religion". Unlike territorial states or state-nations, pristine Islam has no geographical boundaries or nationalistic limits. The concept of nation-state could, in many respects, be viewed as novel to Arab-Islamic history in the sense that it is based on the concept of internal sovereignty and citizenship, which presupposes loyalty to the secular symbols of the nation instead of God. Some say that the concept of political sovereignty never developed in Islam.

But modern Islam's position on the nation-state is not clear-cut. And although the sovereign state is a *de facto* reality in Muslims' lives, many still vehemently reject the nation-state concept. Some researchers maintain that territorial pluralism is acceptable in the theory of Islam and point to medieval Islamic writers such as Al Ghazzali, Ibn Tymiyya and Ibn Khaldun who envisioned an Islamic legal order incorporating the "reality of divisions and multiple centres of power."

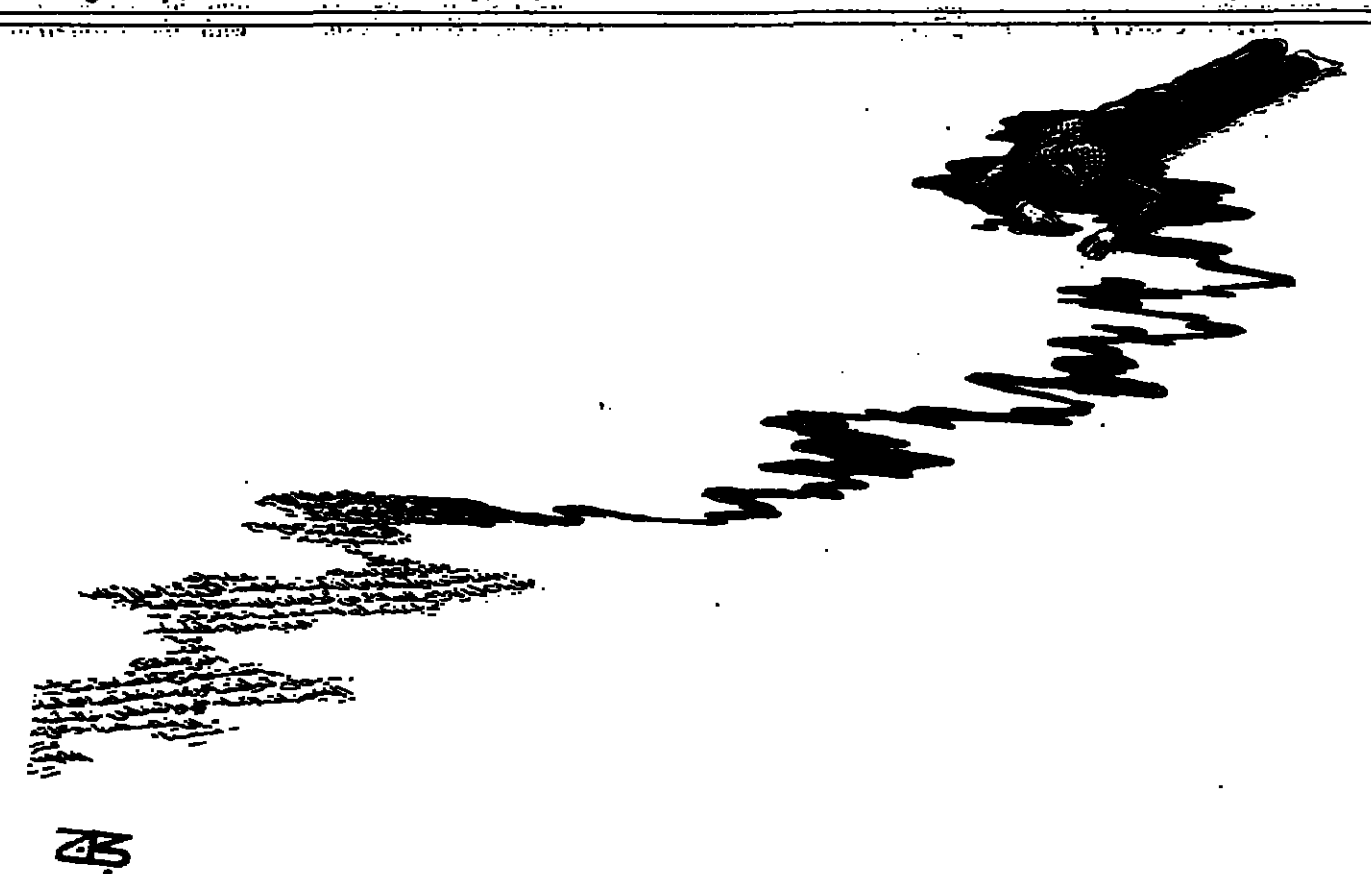
Conclusion

From the above account of the nation-state in the region and the position of Islam on the nation-state, one clearly observes that people in the region are torn between their tribal, territorial, religious, ethnic and Arab identities. Worse, even basic concepts like "religious" or "Arab" identities are in themselves highly complex and difficult to determine. The problem is further exacerbated by the conflicting realities underlying the issue of identity in the region. These conflicting realities can largely be ascribed to the age-old friction between "tradition" and "foreign imports", the failure of the intelligentsia to capture masses' imaginations and the total manipulation of means of information by Arab regimes.

The last reality is of paramount importance as large-scale political indoctrination, though may achieve short-term gains, engenders confusion and projects misleading realities. The unprecedented speedy collapse of the Eastern bloc, is an example in mind.

The issue of Jordanian identity is a continuum and product of the above mentioned regional realities. And since the question of Jordanian identity touches every Jordanian citizen, national participation in tackling this complex question could not have been more vital. Responsible democratic debate, coupled with state's benign guidance, is the panacea for reconciling the apparent conflict between maintaining traditionalism and promoting a secular collective identity. The state and the intelligentsia, therefore, equally share the responsibility of tailoring an identity which enhances confidence in our collective tradition; yet also makes us perceptive to positive adaptation at such transitional period.

The writer is a doctoral candidate in law, at the London School of Economics.



Portuguese come in from margins for S. African vote

By Judith Matloff Reuter

JOHANNESBURG — The Portuguese community, one of South Africa's largest white immigrant groups, is coming in from the political wilderness to demand a voice in a new post-apartheid system.

After years of sitting on the margins with no political voice of their own, Portuguese community leaders are trying to win a foothold in the first all-race elections on April 26-28.

The newly formed Luso South African Party (LUSAP) aims to capture at least two parliamentary seats to defend the rights of an estimated 400,000 to 700,000 people of Portuguese descent.

"The Portuguese community is one of the largest minority communities here but has never been directly represented in parliament," said Antonio de Gouveia, LUSAP's deputy president.

"We can offer the Portuguese community something no one else can — we speak the same language, understand their needs. We can help integrate the community."

He said many among his potential electorate were

shop keepers and small businessmen from around the Johannesburg area. Many are descendants of immigrants from the poor Atlantic island of Madeira who came to South Africa at the start of the century seeking a better life.

Others fled the turmoil in nearby Mozambique and Angola after independence from Portugal in the mid-1970s.

Many of the latter group fear similar upheaval after South Africa's first all-race elections. Portuguese diplomats report high numbers of people renewing their passports and taking prolonged holidays.

LUSAP hopes to reassure them that someone will look after them if they stay.

"We hope LUSAP will reduce the number of Portuguese leaving the country and give them a reason to stay," Mr. Gouveia said.

The close-knit community defiantly cling to old ways. In suburbs south of Johannesburg, grocery shops bearing Portuguese names offer typical fare of olives and spicy chorizo sausage. Many of the older generation barely speak English and football clubs bear the name of teams back home.

It is this culture that LUSAP wants to defend, Mr. Gouveia said. He noted that when multi-party negotiators wrote the interim constitution, there was no politician interested in adding Portuguese to the list of 11 official languages.

Other key issues were exchange controls for the many Portuguese sending money back to Europe and protecting Portuguese-language programmes in schools.

It remains to be seen whether this will be enough of a selling card to woo votes away from the ruling National Party (NP), which the Portuguese community has traditionally supported in elections.

Mr. Gouveia said LUSAP was most interested in winning first time voters, of whom there was an uncalculated number.

"It stands to reason that many people will continue to vote for the NP. But it is those people who never voted before that we think we can win over."

President F.W. de Klerk, campaigning in Natal and Cape regions where the Portuguese community is sizeable, insisted his NP would not lose its Lusophone backing.

confident but I have no doubt that the overwhelming majority of the Portuguese community are supporters of the National Party," he said this month.

Moises Venancio, a political analyst with a Lisbon think-tank, saw the formation of LUSAP as an unusual development for a largely apolitical community that tended to keep a low profile, or run when the going got rough.

"The Portuguese are showing a commitment to the new South Africa by forming their own party. The fact that they are starting a new party is an example to the rest of the Portuguese community to ally fears and could help persuade them to stay."

The Portuguese government was non-committal about LUSAP, saying it could not involve itself in South African politics.

"We are completely neutral. But our general policy is that we encourage all Portuguese citizens or people of Portuguese origin here to fully participate in the new South Africa," Foreign Minister Jose Durao Barroso said in a recent visit.

But he said it would be a mistake for the Portuguese community to form a "political ghetto."

Hebron killer praised as a hero by young Israelis

By Sarah Helm

THE EULOGISING of Baruch Goldstein, the perpetrator of the Hebron Mosque massacre, by militant Jewish settlers is being echoed by teenagers in Israel's high schools, to the dismay of many teachers and education officials.

Recently the Education Ministry ordered special lessons to be held on tolerance and the value of human life, after surveys showed substantial support for the slaughter.

The mass circulation daily paper, Yedioth Ahronot, which surveyed pupils at a middle class school in Jerusalem, found that almost all those questioned praised the massacre. "It was a mitzva (commandment of the Jewish law)," said Nir Ezra, 17. "He should have taken grenades."

Joe Kolodner, head of the ministry's school psychology department, told the newspaper: "If after 45 years a generation has grown up here who think that what happened in Hebron is OK, that is a sign that there is a deep crisis in Israeli society."

While many teenagers are uninhibited in their backing for the massacre, a significant number of their parents are also lending tacit, sometimes open, support. Yitzhak Rabin, the Israeli Prime Minister, along with most political leaders, intellectuals and media commentators, has loudly condemned the atrocity, but significant numbers of ordinary Israelis heavily qualify their criticism of the killings. Many declare that the Arabs "got what they deserve."

An opinion poll published recently showed that 50 per cent of Israelis should remain in Hebron, and 76 per cent said the government should not disarm settlers.

Liberal Jewish religious leaders say they are deeply disturbed by the readiness of many Israelis to justify Goldstein's act on religious grounds, and are already moving to try to halt what they term "dangerous" and "demonic" interpretations of Judaism which "by osmosis" are entering the common language of ordinary people inside Israel proper. A group of

"Rabbis for Peace", Netiv Shalom, recently held an unprecedented demonstration outside the chief Rabbi's office which they say has not got far enough to condemn the atrocity. "We are concerned about the moral wellbeing of the Jewish people. There is growing demonic interpretation of Judaism and our responsibility is to show we clearly that the interpretation of Judaism given by the murderer is not Jewish, should be placed outside the law and outside Judaism," said Moshe Halberstam, a Netiv Shalom leader.

Most young Israelis on experience "Arabs" who they are sent to subdue the volatile neighbours, or who they see the image of a Palestinian "terrorist" standing up to Israeli forces, plied over and over again on television.

What the response to the massacre confirms is that support given to the per moves among many Israelis did not spring from feelings of generosity towards Palestinians, but out of a desperate desire to shake off the load of the burden of the occupation. "The desire of Israelis for political solution largely stemmed out of fear of the other side," said Yizl Be'er, director of B'Tselem, the Israeli human rights group.

Mr. Rabin has made his personal disgust at Baruch Goldstein's act, and in an emotional speech to the Knesset, he said: "A Jew, as an Israeli, as a man and as a human being, I shamed upon the disgrace I posed upon us by a degenerate murderer."

Nevertheless, the overall message from the government has been mixed. Rabin's comments have been neutralised by his failure to do so. So far government has refused to remove even the most heinous settlers from Hebron.

The Independent

A host of talented artists give fine shape to End Of A Brave Man

By Mohammad Mashariqa

The successful television series *End Of A Brave Man*, which attracted viewers in Jordan, Syria and other parts of the Arab World during the month of Ramadan, was in fact a joint Jordanian-Syrian work although it was marketed as a Syrian series in the region.

Not many viewers have noticed the contribution by a team of Jordanian technicians who were involved in sound effects, music and direction of the series, nor did the local media draw attention to their participation to this successful achievement.

The director of the popular series was a Jordanian, Najdat Enzour, who had earlier directed a great number of Jordanian television programmes and series, including the well-known "Al Kaff Wal Makhraz" (The Palm And The Punch), and a movie depicting the oriental lifestyle, which has won several awards.

There was also Mohammad Bandoura, the well-known Jordanian television technician who did the sound effects and special effects in cooperation with his female colleague Rabah Shakhshir.

However, the music in this series played a leading role in its success, as attested by a number of Syrian musicians like Suheil Arafah who said the music has contributed to a great extent to the series' great success.

The composer was Tareq Al Nasser, a 25-year-old Jordanian musician whose works are best known in the cartoons in the earlier years of his endeavours. In the past two years, Nasser composed music for the series *Petra Caravan* and *Death Of A Bride* and songs for the Syrian singer Amal Arafah as a sign of his new developed talents. Nasser's resort to Arab tradition in his music and the use of a new assortment of musical instruments have perhaps helped him achieve success.

"When Najdat Enzour presented me with the scenario and the words of the introductory song of the series (*End Of A Brave Man*), I felt I had to read the whole novel which was written by Hanna Mina. Because reading gives one a better insight on the various characters and the events," said Nasser. "Indeed, reading the novel enabled me to better compose the music for this fine work of art."

Nasser attributed the success of the series' music to the fact that he was familiar with the life of people inhabiting the Syrian coast, noting that he actually interacted with the characters through his own feelings and with the natural environment, by remembering his own life among the local residents and their surroundings.

AMMAN CULTURAL PULSE

"Furthermore, Hanna Mina introduced me to Gabriel Saadeh, an old musician, who briefed me on the historic events of the novel and the musical instruments used during that era, as well as the kind of songs sung by the fishermen of the time", added Nasser.

"It was this familiarity with the environment that influenced my music which was composed in cooperation with two Jordanian musicians who played the Buzoq and the Oud (lute)", he pointed out.

"I have composed the music with a new vision and with new distributions that reflected well on the scenes of sadness and gloom or enthusiasm and zeal. But in either case it was all along linked with the introductory piece, thus making the work look integrated and in unison," Nasser said.

"I have contributed more than eight hours of music to

this masterpiece — a relatively high rate of contribution in an Arabic television series — and this is perhaps attributed to Enzour's method of direction," Nasser pointed out. He said music was essentially needed to cover the long moments of silence under the camera, and music was used as a substitute for speech in such intervals.

Indeed, he continued, "music soared significantly in the final phases of the series when the hero (Mufid) was contemplating the sea while in his crippled condition, he was ruminating his memories as an inmate in Arwad Jail. "The music rises to a crescendo for a while before declining abruptly to a low tone as the hero reaches the final conclusion of death," Nasser noted. "Viewers must have sensed Mufid's inner feelings about life and death in the final episode before death actually came to the man thanks to that music" continued Nasser. This technique, he added, was instrumental in preparing the viewers for the last act.

Nasser advocates the role of sensational music in expressing the feelings of characters of a play, stressing that such technique has a far deeper effect on the viewer than the hitherto traditional methods. "It took me six whole months shuttling between Amman, Damascus and Beirut, and studying the environment and other relevant preparations before I was able to come up with this illustrative music for the series."

The Petra Musical Group, which participated in this work, has no doubt benefitted a great deal from the technical and musical distribution experiment "which prompted its members and myself to decide that our joint work from now on should be linked to and serving the traditional environment," Nasser said.

Expressing his own views about the future in the light of the series' success, Nasser said: "Perhaps the most



Jordanian musician Tareq Al Nasser

important lesson I have learnt from working a road was to realise that Jordan abounds with highly experienced and talented artists that can assume a high position among Arab artists."

"The producer of the *End Of A Brave Man* has aimed at presenting the viewers with high-quality work because he was keen on marketing the series, and no doubt our high-quality musical contribution was instrumental in helping him achieve his objective," Nasser said.

Fun with Barbie — glamour doll as cultural icon

By Frank Bajak
The Associated Press

BERLIN — Call her sublime. The most popular doll of all time. A cultural icon transcending generations. It's enough to get dozens of artists and designers all worked up.

Barbie, you see, is 35. The leggy, chesty molded plastic mannequin is adored, adorned, mocked and defrocked — even pickled — in a special anniversary show by mostly German artists at Berlin's premiere art exhibition hall, the Martin-Gropius-Bau.

One Barbie is "Lady Liberty," straddling a globe held aloft by two men, hot pink high-heels crossing the Atlantic. Another is

spray-painted white and pierced from head to ankle with a few hundred nails.

Or there's the life-size mannequin with the Barbie accessory-spangled gown and three-headed shoes, eyeglasses framed with Barbie arms and legs.

And lots of Barbies got their hair done — by stylists such as Vidal Sassoon.

"There has never been anything like this, to my knowledge, relating to a doll, let alone Barbie," said the doll's 77-year-old American creator Ruth Handler.

At the exhibit's opening last month, Ms. Handler heard people use the words "cult" and "icon" in discussing her doll's role in popular culture.

"Those are two words I had never heard before," she said.

But then there's never been anything like Barbie, an 11 1/2-inch (29-centimeter) figure with a flawless figure who transformed "playing dolls."

With Barbie, girls became more than diaper-changing mothers. With this new adult doll, they could play out their dreams of adolescence and beyond. Barbie at the prom. Barbie gets married. Barbie goes to the moon.

"Over and over I've had it said to me by women," Ms. Handler said in a telephone interview from her Los Angeles home. "She was much more than a doll for them. She was part of

them."

Ms. Handler got the idea for Barbie from the paper dolls with which her own daughter played. She found the model in 1956 in a European doll based on a comic-strip character, known as Lilli, from the German newspaper Bild.

"This was the first adult doll that I saw," said Ms. Handler.

Barbie — along with Ms. Handler's "play concept" of selling dolls and separate clothes and accessories — was introduced to a dubious market at the 1959 New York Toy Fair.

The blond, blue-eyed beauty in the black-and-white striped jersey bathing suit and sandals, named af-

ter Ms. Handler's daughter, proved a quick hit.

Several transformations later, Barbie is now available in lots of colours in more than 100 lands, and every two seconds, another Barbie is sold.

More than 700 million Barbie, Ken (the boyfriend created in 1961) and Skipper (the sister who appeared in 1964) dolls have been sold, according to Mattel, the toymaker Ms. Handler founded with her husband in 1945.

The idea for the "Art, Design And Barbie" exhibit came from Mattel's German operation, which told organisers that anything goes — except obscenity. Among rejected offerings was one by an artist named

Stiletto who saw in Barbie the long-legged streetwalkers of Berlin.

One work deemed unappealing by lots of the little girls accompanying mothers at the exhibit was a cupboard full of preserves. Interspersed with jars of pickled meat and vegetables were jars of pickled Barbies.

"Barbie, I'll gladly have you to eat," declares artist Frank Lindow in accompanying notes. "Young, beautiful, crisp and fresh and in permanent battle with the expiration date."

The exhibit ran through March 6. Organisers said it has travelled to Hamburg. Currently, there are no plans to take it abroad.

Languages enter brave new world of technology

By Nelson Graves
Reuters

PARIS — Time was when learning a foreign language was all rote, repetition and raps on the knuckles, the knuckles.

Instead of mind-numbing vocabulary lists or the cacophony of a language laboratory, a student tackling a foreign tongue can now manipulate high-tech technology gadgets that create the linguistic equivalent of virtual reality.

The sights and accents of Rome, London, New York, Tokyo and Paris are but a computer keystroke away.

Last month the annual language fair in Paris, Expolangues, once largely the domain of publishers and travel agents, bristled with hardware in a display of technological progress.

Anyone comfortable with a personal computer and a mouse cannot help diving right in.

Want to improve your French accent? Try on a set of Aura-Lang headphones. The computer screen and sound lead you into a fictional restaurant where you're asked to order a meal.

Don't worry if the waiter doesn't understand, you won't starve. The computer, never short of patience, will help you work on that pronunciation.

Still having trouble? The computer displays a "sonogram" of the waiter's voice, beckoning you to repeat after him. When you speak, your voice traces its own sound graph below the waiter's, showing you where to adjust your pronunciation.

Are you a lousy speller? Type "sophisticated" into a Franklin pocket computer and it replies "sophisticated".

Load your computer with a CD-Rom of the U.S. television series *Family Album* for a lesson in American culture and pronunciation like "I musta bought the wrong size jeans."

Jeanne-Marie Chevallier of the magazine *Europe Et Liberte* wonders if reliance on computers does not carry a price. "Will they overthrow books? Will they overthrow travel?" she asked a forum on the teaching instruments of tomorrow.

But Expolangues President Jean-Pierre Van Deth says technology will help Europeans cement ties.

"Rapidly evolving tech-

nology will allow people to learn three, four, five languages, all at a bearable cost," he said.

Thomas Miller, language counsellor at the U.S. embassy in Paris, said technology was needed to enable 31 million non-native English speakers in the United States to learn the language.

"There are twice as many Americans learning English in the United States today as French," Mr. Miller said. "We need to have technology with those numbers."

Mr. Van Deth said Europe's push towards economic and political union had to be accompanied by greater respect for the continent's multitude of languages and cultures to ensure peace.

"If we think of European

nations as natural friends, we are doomed to failure," he said in an interview.

"Efforts by Charles de Gaulle, Napoleon and Hitler to build a monolithic Europe failed, and the nations are in a miraculous balance. We have to accept our different historical traditions."

Mr. Van Deth does not begrudge the role of English as a common linguistic currency but says it cannot open the door to cross-border understanding. "English allows us to speak from one yard to another but doesn't admit us into a neighbour's garden."

Language instruction in France has been hampered by a war among teachers defending linguistic terrain, he says.

The government profes-

ses to favour diversification but the vast majority of students continue to study English as their first foreign language, followed by Spanish and German.

Mr. Van Deth said the enthusiasm for languages that preceded the establishment of a single European market in 1993 waned dramatically as the economy languished after the Gulf War and the drive for European Union hit a rough patch.

Companies are spending less on language training and people are opting for fewer trips to dabble in foreign languages.

"It's a temporary setback," Mr. Van Deth said. "Man in the 21st century will be a citizen not only of his country but of larger groups like Europe."

By Elaine Ganley
The Associated Press

PARIS — It's not easy being French these days. Or so the government seems to think.

Apprehensive authorities see outside influences — namely by Americans — corrupting the language, trampling on tradition and spoiling the fine cuisine.

So the conservative government has taken steps over the past six months to protect the bastions of French culture.

Critics say the counterattack is futile — and typically French.

"Culture is fine as long as we make proper use of it," Pierre Berge, head of the Yves Saint Laurent fashion

house, recently wrote — in English, no less — for the magazine *Globe Hebdo*.

He was criticising the latest measure in the campaign to rehabilitate the national identity: A proposed language bill that would require use of French for most commercial purposes, including advertisements. Offenders would be fined.

It's not the first time the French have voiced fears of cultural demise.

Former Culture Minister Jack Lang railed against American "cultural im-

perialism" in 1982, shortly after his Socialist Party came to power. As far back as the 19th century, the French were complaining about English words cropping up in business correspondence.

"The French are very addicted to criticising themselves and being very worried," said Theodore Zeldin, a British author who explores the French character in his books. "I do not think the French culture is being threatened."

But the government

does, and the main culprit is the United States.

Politicians recently went to the rescue of "La Chanson," passing a law that will set quotas for French songs on radio stations. By January 1996, 40 per cent of the songs aired must be home-made.

Jean-Loup Tournier, head of a songwriters' group which pressed for help to save French music, said the stakes were too far-reaching.

"How far can we go," he asked, "before cultural enrichment transforms into

loss of identity?"

The song bill came just before France's much ballyhooed victory in its battle to exempt the film and TV industry from a new world trade agreement. The United States, which wanted to ease French government protection of the audiovisual sector, relented when it became clear France would veto the entire accord.

"All this to defend French culture," Prof. Peer Bundgaard of Denmark's University of Aarhus, lamented in a recent article

in the Paris newspaper *Libération*. "It is a testimony to the melancholy for paradise lost."

Over the centuries, France has shrunk from mighty empire to second-tier power, losing wars, colonies and influence. The French language has been largely supplanted by English in international forums. More ominously, to some French officials, it has been bastardised with English words.

With this in mind, Culture Minister Jacques Toubon decreed language a geopolitical concern. A foreign tongue can become an "instrument of domination," he said, and protecting French must be a national cause.

Foreign incursions spur French to defend identity

For Russia in 1994, three regional states are key neighbours, Turkey, Iran and Afghanistan, all sharing long, sensitive Russian or CIS borders guarded by Russian troops. Relations with these states are bound to remain important to Moscow, even if Arab countries of the Middle East also count. Predicting the future course of Russia's policy, Vassiliev states, "it will be neither pro-Arab nor pro-American; it will serve only its own interests. It will prefer to gamble on more than one horse, i.e. on the main forces in the region, sometimes even competing ones." Mutual cooperation between Middle Eastern states and some of the CIS republics may well develop on a sound basis through their geographical proximity.

But Moscow's diplomacy has another challenge in the Middle East, to play a helpful and subtle role in reaching peace settlements in serious regional problems, especially those of the Kurdish minorities living in Turkey, Iraq, Iran and Syria together with the ongoing war in Southern Sudan.

An additional complication arises from the independence of the ex-Soviet republics in Transcaucasia and Central Asia. Both regions are now effectively becoming part of the Middle East and are bound to experience political instability — Middle East International.

Anthony Hyman

BOOK REVIEW

A power to reckon with

Russian Policy In The Middle East: From Messianism to Pragmatism

By Alexei Vassiliev

Ithaca Press, Reading, England 1993, £35

Russia has lost its superpower status but remains a power to reckon with in the Middle East, despite the severity of its economic crisis and internal threats. This new book analyses Soviet foreign policy in the Middle East from the 1917 revolution to the present. The emphasis is on the last four decades, when Soviet power and influence were at their peak. Vassiliev was for long a journalist for Pravda, before becoming a professor at the Institute for African Studies in Moscow. He shows himself bolder in his thinking than this conventional party background might lead the reader to expect, with independent judgements on many issues, from the cultivation of the Communist movement in the Middle East, Soviet relations with Aden and San'a, Syria and Iraq to Palestine and Israel.

The rise and fall of Soviet influence in the Middle East has been charted before, notably by Mohammad Heikal in *Sphinx And Commissar* and other books since 1978, but rarely so frankly by a Russian writer. Inevitably, Soviet relations with Egypt under Nasser and Sadat are given close attention here. It was in 1955 that Moscow broke the Western arms sales monopoly by its first arms deal to Egypt, with the centrepiece of Soviet-Egyptian cooperation becoming the construction of the Aswan High Dam.

Partly because of the inaccessibility of Soviet official records, much of the book's insights or revelations are built around interviews with anonymous Soviet diplomats and former policy-makers. These dialogues contain many examples of a refreshing frankness. But Soviet diplomatic reports to the Kremlin were less candid, nearly always reflecting what the Politburo wanted to hear. "There was a desire to see an imaginary world", rather than the imperfect one which actually existed.

An important shift in Soviet foreign policy, evident by the late 1960s, was greater emphasis on providing military assistance than development aid. The absence of official statistics prevents the measuring of the true value and costs to the USSR of its large-scale military aid to Egypt, Syria, Iraq, Libya, the two Yemens, Algeria and other Arab states. Scarcely though he is about the benefits, Vassiliev assumes the arms trade was in general financially profitable to Moscow, besides boosting its political influence. "By supplying sophisticated weaponry that could be maintained and operated only with the assistance of Soviet technicians to certain countries, such as Syria, Iraq and Libya, the USSR ensured the presence of a considerable number of its military experts." However, adds Vassiliev "with rare exceptions the Soviet Union did not supply the latest models of military hardware."

Noting how firm the strategic alliance between the U.S. and Israel remains, the writer contrasts it with the numerous "friendship and cooperation agreements" made between the USSR and so many Arab states, those "ties of semi-alliance reduced to ashes."

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Scanners — those amazing tools

By Jean-Claude Elias

On their very first training course, personal computer (PC) users are usually told that the computer is a "black box" that processes an incoming flow of data and then sends it back as outgoing data. The incoming data is fed into the black box via various devices called "input units" while the outgoing, processed data, is sent to the operator via "output units."

What happens in between the input and the output, inside the black box, is of little interest to those who are not particularly technically oriented and wish to see the results only.

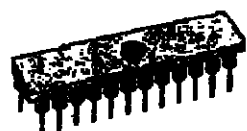
The keyboard was originally the exclusive input unit. It was joined in the mid-eighties by the now famous mouse. The most fascinating, modern input device however is the scanner.

PC scanners are available in two formats. A pocket-size, hand held model, roughly 4x6 inches large and the A4 model that can take documents the size of a standard letterhead paper. In the beginning, scanners were only used to feed photographs, maps, drawings, graphs and all sorts of images into the computer. Operators who thought of their wonderful machines could take only text rejoice.

Before scanners were introduced, the only way to process drawings with a PC was to actually do the drawing from the start, using the available software. In addition to being difficult and slow, this process did not give the users the possibility to take advantage of already existing documents.

Once people became familiar with operations like scanning their own photograph and merging it in a text for a superior presentation for example, a whole world opened to them — the one of Desk Top Publishing (DTP). The art of DTP now lets private users prepare bulletins, newsletters, even complete books, and pub-

chip talk



lish them in a very professional format.

The most recent scanners application however is the Optical Character Recognition (OCR); the fastest, most efficient way to enter text in a computer. You can take a written (typed or even hand written) sheet, insert it in the scanner and the PC will literally read it, placing it as a text file in your favourite word processing programme. You can then edit it, adding, deleting or modifying whatever you wish.

OCR can save you tens, hundreds of hours of tedious keyboard typing. Currently, however, it is far from being perfect. If you are scanning an already typed document, the error rate will be around ten to five per cent. You would have therefore to retype such a percentage of the text. Barely acceptable. If you are scanning a hand written document, the error rate will vary from 15 per cent in the best case, up to 90 per cent in the worst, making the whole operation useless.

Those who always scan the same handwriting — i.e. of the same person — can spend a little time "teaching" the scanner to better "understand" it. The process is rewarding and not very difficult. In such cases the error rate can drop down to four or three per cent, tremendously increasing the efficiency of the whole system.

Scanners are also useful to the owners of PCs fitted with a fax card. Without a scanner, a PC fax can only transmit texts or drawings created from within the computer. With a scanner, existing documents, sheets can also be scanned and faxed making the system very complete and professional.

Hand held scanners cost around JD 200 while A4-size units are around JD1000 to JD 1500. Some models work only in black and white, but colour ones are becoming increasingly popular. Most models and brands are available in Jordan.

ON THE LIGHTER SIDE

By Mohammad A. Shuqair

BELIEVE IT OR NOT

- Ringworm is not a worm, it is a fungus.
- The famous American composer, Joseph Griller, wrote a musical note for the American Constitution so as people would be able to chant it as a song.
- Friends throw old shoes at newly wedded couples because it is considered a lucky omen.
- A 92-year old woman used to run 24 kilometres daily.
- The estimated weight of the Great Pyramid of Egypt is 6,648,000 tonnes.
- La Paz, Bolivia, has the highest altitude of any city in the world.

LET'S LEARN ARABIC

- Upon my word. *Biharati.*
- I like all kinds of fruit. *Ohub koll suwa al fakha.*
- Lots of people think so. *Kathir minan'uz yazon zalik.*
- Tea is my favourite drink. *Ash-shay sharabi al-mufaddal.*
- Everything comes to him who waits. *Man sabar zafar.*
- I've lost weight. *Lakad khaffa wazni.*
- I admire your hospitality. *Eani moojab bikaramak.*
- I'll tell you a nice story. *Se'akool laka kissa latifa.*
- He likes gaiety and fun. *Hawa yohib al-marah wal-lahu.*
- I wish you every success. *Atamanna laka koll najah.*

YOUR MEDICAL GUIDE

DELIRIUM

It is a state of restlessness in which the patient is only partly conscious. Delirium usually accompanies a high fever, and the patient may throw himself about, pick at the bedclothes and mutter to himself without ceasing. A delirious patient is nearly always in serious danger, but if for some reason medical help is not readily available it may help to sponge him down with tepid water until the doctor arrives. This will reduce the temperature of the body, and will often quieten the patient down for a while. A special form of delirium known as delirium tremens is associated with chronic alcoholism, and may follow an exceptionally heavy bout of drinking. A patient reduced to this condition will require treatment in a hospital or institution.

JOKES

- A blind man, escorted by a friend, entered a place where many of his acquaintances were assembling. FRIEND: Who is it that's coming with you? BLIND MAN: He's one of my closest bulldozers.
- The bus was full and overcrowded. It was very hot that day. One of the passengers got on and unintentionally trod on a man's foot. The man steamed with anger while the other coldly tried to apologise. Rejecting the passenger's apology, the angry man said: "Do you know who I am?" "Who could you be?" "You're a mere passenger like any body here riding a bus for one piastre in such an immense heat!"

- MOTHER: "Listen, boy. You should do just as I tell you."
- SON: "What nonsense you say, mum! Do you think you are talking to dad?"

- A Chinese student at the University of Michigan, who memorised phrases from an etiquette book, had his first opportunity to try them out at a reception given by the president of the college. When a cup of tea was handed to him, he solemnly responded: "Thank you, sir or madam, as the case may be."

YOUR DREAMS INTERPRETED

- DELIRIUM: You are bottling up something you need to get off your chest if you dreamt of being delirious; a sympathetic and trusty ear could avoid an embarrassing explosion, so try to find one. If your dream featured others in a delirious state, you will get help from an unknown source.
- INSANITY: A sort of dream of contrary, as good news is predicted if you dreamt of being insane, but if your dream featured others so afflicted, you can expect an unpleasant surprise.
- CONFUSION: If the main feature of your dream was an overall or general atmosphere of confusion, you are being warned to continue along your present lines, as any changes you are contemplating could prove awkward at this time; but if you dreamt confusion was purely personal, it predicts recovery of a long-lost hope.

BANK OF KNOWLEDGE

1. Who wrote under the pseudonym Boz?
2. What is another name for pyrotechnics?
3. An invention began as a penny-farthing. What is it now?
4. Which Australian balladist was nicknamed 'Banjo'?
5. If Uncle Sam symbolises the United States, who symbolises Britain?
6. What do you expect to find in an aviary?

PUZZLES

(A) POISON FROM TREES

A deadly poison may be made from one-eighth of chestnut, one-fourth of pine, one-third of elm, one-fifth of maple, one-sixth of willow, one-seventh of hickory, and one-third of an oak.

What poison is it?

(B) OUT OF THE SQUARE

A square figure can be cut into four pieces which can be rearranged to make the shape shown here.

How would you cut the square? →



The legacy

By E. Yaghi

Ramadan 24, Amman — Black clouds fled across the violent dark sky, pursued by a harsh wind. The air, cold and vengeful penetrated the little room and outside amidst the howls and groans of the torrents of weather, a cock crowed thrice. The whitewashed house trimmed in blue withstood the onslaught of the storm while the dunum of land surrounding it seemed to shudder and huddle nearer it for shelter. The grapevines hung listless and lifeless, their brown limbs tired of reaching for an unknown destination, gnarled themselves in stunted growth and a few grey withered leaves clung against the rushing cold front until at last the wind victoriously wrenched them free and bore them off to an unknown destination. Somehow, the lemon trees in the large yard still bore their yellow fruit which swung heavily like the pendulum on a clock of doom. The rose bushes exposed their bareness and not a hint of growth appeared on the yet barren mulberry trees that leaned against the bordering wall for support.

Just before the dawn prayer, inside the three-room house, an old man lay on a bed, his eyes rolled upwards towards the ceiling seeing nothing as his mind wove in and out of consciousness into the past, back to the present and through the future. He thought he faintly heard his first wife's voice when she had been ill, when she summoned him to her deathbed to hear her mumble out the words: "Listen carefully my husband, although you are still strong, I won't be here to take care of you any longer. You need a wife to look after you since your sons have all moved away and abandoned us. I have some money hidden in the bedroom closet. Take it, it's all yours. I saved it for such a time of need. Now, use it and get married to a good woman who will carry on my duties."

He balked at the thought at first, but after her death he faced a dark lonely house upon his return from his job on a tractor. There were no warm home cooked meals, no one to keep him company. After some months of solitary sojourn, he took his wife's savings and went and got himself a bride, who appeared as if she might never get married except to someone like him. He, an elderly man with thinning white hair, brought his bride, a foreign Arab, to his small home and surrounding dunum of land. There she dwelt, a serving good wife who bore him four children. His condition deteriorated until he was forced to quit his job. He then underwent several operations which aided in his further physical decline. During Ramadan, he was only the shadow of the man he used to be. One day his wife wheeled him out onto the porch in a wheelchair where his once robust frame now was only sharp angles and bones and his head, too weak to be supported by his neck, slumped over his chest and he remained almost oblivious to the

laughter of his children or the world around him. Back on his bed, he opened his eyes for a few moments and stretched his neck towards the brightly painted tan door which stood ajar. Next to it, sat his four children in a row on a couch near his bed. Their faces glistened in the light like wet rocks in rain as if they had been crying, could it be for him? He knew he was going to die, but it was like a dream. He closed his eyes and he was young again, running through wild young fields laced with poppies and violets which danced in the breeze to the song of meadowlarks and the flutter of seagulls and not too far away he could hear the roar of the sea calling him, demanding him to come and walk barefoot in its waves.

He felt a hand on his shoulder and the voice of his wife calling him back to the present saying: "Abu Deeb, is there anything I can get you?"

His mouth framed a word but no sound came out. Again he fought his weakness and puffed out a gasp of "water!"

Im Deeb disappeared and he lapsed into no man's land where the living fear to tread until again, a strong young hand raised up his head gently to press a glass of water to his cracked dry lips. He tried to swallow but he felt he was drowning and as if his wife read his eyes, she lowered his head back onto his weary pillow.

He heard someone beckon him saying in an angelic musical voice: "Come, come with me. Take my hand and I will show you a whole new world."

An apparition held out her hand. He stared at her, there she was, his first wife looking just like she did when she was 20. He smiled and as he stretched out his hand to grab hers, he heard small children crying somewhere in the background. Just as he floated away with the angel of his past he thought he heard a deep wail. And so it was, he slipped away from the era of the living. Later when the sun crept up through the black clouds and rain, a wooden table was brought to Abu Deeb's home along with a wooden coffin. His stiff body was placed on the wooden table for his final earthly washing and then he was placed in a coffin and carried by his first wife's sons to his grave. There he was placed in the silent cold earth and when his relatives who came to pay their final respects departed, he was left with only his deeds.

Outside his small house, the wooden table and the coffin, their purpose served, stood empty in the pouring rain. Inside, four young children were left without a father and the good woman who had served him until his death sat alone perhaps wondering how she could manage without him and who could explain to her youngest, a toddler, that he would never see his father again.

Was he wrong to remarry in his old age and leave four children orphaned? Who can judge?

Cartoons keep Anglo-German rivalry live and kicking

By Kevin Liffey
Reuters

BONN — Right on cue for the start of an exhibition of Anglo-German cartoons in Bonn, British caricaturists are showing that their image of Germany has not changed much in 50 years.

News that Britain's last volume carmaker, Rover, was being taken over by Germany's BMW spawned a drawing in the tabloid Daily Star of a Nazi officer standing in a Rover giving a Hitler salute as the car came off the production line.

Predictably, the cartoon was reproduced the next day in German papers with some bemusement that the British had still not buried their resentment over World War II.

The collection of German and British cartoons brought together by Germany's overseas cultural organisation, the Goethe Institute, and Osnabrueck University, shows that stereotypes are deployed with alacrity in both directions.

German cartoons are full of images of Britain as stubbornly isolationist and economically pitiable. A 1976 drawing in the weekly Die Zeit shows the

then British Prime Minister James Callaghan in a diving suit walking on the seabed looking for the British pound, which has sunk out of sight in the latest sterling crisis.

In 1990 the Westdeutsche Allgemeine Zeitung pictured Prime Minister Margaret Thatcher — at the height of her campaign against a federal Europe — armed with a machine gun to repel the "invaders" who are just about to emerge after drilling the Channel Tunnel link from France.

British cartoons in return portray Germans as arrogant, domineering and excessively disciplined. "Will you be paying in pounds or Deutschmarks. Your Majesty?" asks a smug master of ceremonies in a 1992 Daily Star cartoon as the powerful German central bank, the Bundesbank, entertains the queen to dinner after another currency crisis.

"Well Engländer," bellows a muscular German thug at a rather feeble-looking Englishman in a 1990 Daily Mirror cartoon.

"Answer the question why do you not like us?" The cartoonists in Britain's popular tabloid press have one favourite characterisation of Germans — as the Nazis Britain fought in World War II.

When the German soccer authorities decided in January to go ahead with a Germany-England friendly in Berlin which by coincidence falls on April 20, Hitler's birthday, newspapers could easily have reprinted a 1990 cartoon from the Daily Star.

Ahead of a World Cup semifinal between the teams, the paper portrayed it as a replay of the World War II confrontation. It showed an ageing Hitler, still alive in a fictitious South American exile, watching the match on television.

"Please don't get so excited, my Fuehrer, it's only a game of football," his staff tell him.

Such images touch a raw nerve in Germany, where Nazism is still too recent and gruesome to be a fit subject for jokes. They stretched the sense of humour of a reviewer for the German daily Frankfurter Allgemeine Zeitung, commenting on the London version of the exhibition which is running at the same time.

She said one British critic recognising it. "Hantavirus, in an even rarer form than that now under investigation, has infected rodents in the United States for years without causing epidemics."

And those infected with the newly discovered form, most commonly deer mice, are usually "either out in the woods or in the fields," Dr. Childs said. "There is no indication that Norway rats (common to urban areas) or house mice are

going to be the major reservoir of this disease."

Most victims of last year's outbreak lived in New Mexico, Arizona, Utah and Colorado, where the rare respiratory disease caused by hantavirus was first recognised in May. Since then, only isolated cases have been reported across the country.

The CDC has confirmed 60 cases of hantavirus in 16 states.

Hantavirus widespread but transmission remains unlikely

By A. J. Hostetler

The Associated Press
ATLANTA — No one wants to run into urban rats prowling subway tunnels or house mice scurrying through cupboards. But they are possibly less dangerous than their shy rodent cousins.

Federal health officials say other kinds of rodents are the most likely to carry the deadly hantavirus — which has killed 36 people in the United States since May.

Early in the investigation of the often fatal respiratory illness, scientists from the Centers for Disease Control and Prevention (CDC) thought they might be dealing with a new virus. But they have since changed their mind.

"We're going to find hantavirus all over the U.S.," predicted Dr. Jamie Childs, a CDC epidemiologist in charge of trapping rodents and looking for signs of infection. "This is not a new disease. We're just newly

recognising it."

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JTV weekly programme not received

Jose Carreras — the last of a dying breed

By Ronald Blum
The Associated Press

NEW YORK — Jose Carreras sees himself as the end of the line, the last tenor of this century with worldwide popularity.

There haven't been any great debuts in almost 25 years, since Carreras followed Luciano Pavarotti and Placido Domingo onto the stage. At 47, Carreras is the youngest of the trio and No. 3 in a pecking order that has no No. 4.

"I'm probably the last exponent of a generation of singers," he said in an interview, a day after meeting with his two colleagues in New York.

When the three were coming up, music fans were used to hearing greats such as Carlo Bergonzi, Franco Corelli, Mario Del Monaco, Giuseppe Di Stefano, Alfredo Kraus, James McCracken, Richard Tucker and Jon Vickers. Now, opera impresarios can't

seem to create any young stars of that magnitude.

"I don't try to be philosophical," Carreras says. "Part of the reason could be the society we are living in these days. We had a hunger.... The new generation — they live in a much more comfortable position — not just in the music, opera world — but in society."

At the best houses in the world — the Metropolitan in New York, the Royal Opera in London, the Vienna State Opera and Teatro alla Scala in Milan — fans are bored by routine casts on many nights and wonder where the great young voices are.

"I go around the world and hear young singers, young talents, good talents," Carreras says. "But there are no appealing personalities, no charismatic personalities, people who go on stage and the audience — it's won over before the note come out of the mouth."

He doesn't sound arrogant when he says this. Rather, he sounds like most opera cognoscenti in the intermission corridors. He is both sincere and charming, and somewhat liberated, top. He had a bone marrow transplant on Nov. 26, 1987 to treat leukemia, which then went into remission. He resumed his career the following summer, cut his schedule from about 100 performances a year to 50 and changed his outlook.

"I've become a bit more mature after this difficult period in my life," he says. "My other priorities have changed a little bit.... Things like success, career, all these things we are all fighting so hard for, there are things that are so much more important than that." Laughs and smiles come, easy to his stubbly face on this cool, autumn afternoon. His dark eyes brighten when he talks about his love of music, soccer and life. Work is important, but

rushing the globe from new production to new production no longer is the top priority.

"I prefer rather than to have an engagement, (to have) a nice weekend, with my friends, playing cards and talking about all the superficial things and deep thoughts. I prefer to permit myself the luxury to sing one less concert. Ten years ago, I wouldn't have done that for no reason. To sing and to perform and to be on stage has been a wonderful thing for me."

Following his professional debut in Barcelona in 1972, he was a part of the music world's whirlwind. Four years later, he sang for Herbert von Karajan at the Salzburg Easter Festival in a Verdi Requiem, and his career soared.

Seeing the system has given him clues as to what has gone wrong.

"It's very difficult to find someone with experience to teach you certain things,"

he says. "In the old times, there were Toscanini, Furtwangler, Bruno Walter."

Following the deaths of Karajan and Leonard Bernstein, the only remaining conductors considered "great" by most critics are Sir Georg Solti and Carlos Kleiber. Teaching no longer is a top priority for music administrators.

"Now, you arrive in an opera house, in 24 hours you do a rehearsal and then you're on stage," Carreras says.

Because he hasn't been offered the right roles and what he feels is the necessary rehearsals, Carreras hasn't sung at the Metropolitan since the 1986-87 season, when he performed Don Jose in Bizet's Carmen. He has sung recitals at Carnegie Hall, and on Feb. 10 will become the first classical artist to give a solo recital at Radio City Music Hall.

Carreras' latest recording is a tribute to Mario Lanza,

whose performance in The Great Caruso, a 1951 movie, helped form the careers of Pavarotti, Domingo and Carreras. After seeing it at age 6 or 7 with his parents, Carreras decided to start singing.

"They were a little worried at the beginning," he said of his parents. "Because I closed myself in the bathroom."

Four decades later, he's at the top of his field. On July 7, 1990, he appeared in the famous three tenors concert at the Baths of Caracalla in Rome, along with Pavarotti and Domingo. They already are discussing the programme for the encore performance at Dodger Stadium next July 16, the night before the World Cup soccer final.

While Zubin Mehta conducted last time, Carreras said it's possible that James Levine, the Metropolitan's artistic director, will lead this performance, which is



Jose Carreras

sure to be replayed millions of times when the videotape and compact disc are released.

Carreras says the programme will be different, which is why it interests him. Later this season, he'll sing Fedora at Covent Gar-

den (he also sang at Barcelona, Spain, recently); Carmen in Munich, Germany; and Samson et Delilah in Vienna.

"It has to be a joy for me to sing every time I go on stage," he says. "It has to be a new challenge."

Canadian model seeks fame on her own terms

By Samantha Conti
Reuter

MILAN — She's on the short side, wears a blonde crew cut and a green dragon tattoo on her skull — not exactly the portrait of today's glamorous supermodel.

She stomps down the runway, shooting bored looks or sneers at photographers, while other models seduce them with smiles.

Eve Salvail, a 22-year-old French Canadian, is trying to stand out. She's battling to make it big as an international runway model — but on her own terms.

In an industry that jealously chooses its queens, Salvail aims to wear the crown of the anti-model.

So far, she's done well. She was a familiar face on the runways at Milan's autumn and winter ready-to-wear shows, and was off to Paris to model in the French equivalent.

"I get used a lot because designers don't have to pay me a lot," Salvail said. "Sometimes they don't even want to pay — they just want to send clothes, but clothes don't pay the rent," she told Reuters in

an interview between shows.

Salvail has smooth white skin and a long, upturned nose. At five feet eight inches, she is on the short side for a business that likes most of its models tall and leggy.

But she is not one who was born to follow.

She had a big green dragon etched onto her shaven head in a Tokyo tattoo parlour — what she calls the most painful time of her life.

Salvail, whose tattoo is now masked by bleached blonde hair, chose the dragon because she thought it would grab attention.

"I started crying when the artist just did a little test on my head," she said. "It was like having a rusty razor blade dig into your skull for three hours. But it was worth it. Now I know I can face any kind of physical pain — for three hours."

Designers and the public know Salvail, but not necessarily by her name. Most call her "the one with the tattoo."

They also know her because of her runway persona.

Likely a sullen adolescent fresh from a fight with her

parents, she storms along the catwalk past beaming supermodels like Claudia Schiffer and Naomi Campbell.

"I walk that way for protection," Salvail said. "I tried and I can't do the little model walk. I think people would laugh at me if I tried, and say that I walked really bad."

But has the strategy worked?

Salvail makes an average of \$1,000 per show — the lower end of the scale for women who are considered "up-and-coming" models. The most they usually earn is about \$5,000 per show.

Supermodels like Schiffer, Campbell, Christy Turlington and Carla Bruni can earn \$15,000 — sometimes more — for a show.

"I work too hard for the money I'm making," she said. "I'm on a plane twice a week which makes me dehydrated and constipated. Sometimes I don't even get my period."

Salvail said her hours at the Milan shows ran from about eight in the morning until one a.m. the following day.

In the last year she has made \$75,000 before taxes — a pittance compared to

her famous colleagues.

Agency fees, she said, consume about 20 per cent of her salary, and she has to pay all of her own expenses.

She and her agent Pina Rizzi, an Italian-Canadian, try to stay with friends when they are on the road because first class hotels are too expensive.

Some fashion experts say Salvail just has to be patient.

"Eve is a fresh face, she's interesting and modern. She's today's woman," said Gabriella Mazzei, who works for Showwork, a company used by designers to hire models for their shows.

"She gets work because designers like her — not because she's cheap. She's paid well, I think, and with time she should make more money," Ms. Mazzei told Reuters.

But Salvail said she doesn't know how long she can hold out.

"I have to ask for more money. If it doesn't work I'll just stop, I could find something else to do — of course it wouldn't pay as much as it wouldn't be as glamorous, but maybe I would have more fun."



Canadian model Eve Salvail presents a black velvet evening dress during a recent 1994/95 fall/winter ready-to-wear collection show in Paris (AFP photo)

Abbott works new Broadway magic at age 106

By Bruce Olson
Reuter

NEW YORK — George Abbott won a Pulitzer Prize when he was 72, directed a Tony-winner when he was 96, and this year, at 106, he took a job as a script doctor to help put a fresh face on an old pal.

But even as this legend of Broadway worked his magic in the revival of the 1955 musical Damn Yankees, Abbott started feeling his age.

"It really hit me the last year. I can't walk, I have a hard time seeing. Hell, they

built me a pool at my house, I got in it, and I sunk," he told Reuters in a recent interview.

He didn't sink with Damn Yankees, however. The script revisions swept away any cobwebs the musical might have developed in the 39 years since it won eight Tonys.

It's an Abbott-stamped musical all the way — peppy, flashy, touching and old-fashioned without being maudlin or trite.

The musical centres on a fervent baseball fan who sells his soul to the devil in hopes his last-place

Washington Senators team can beat the hated New York Yankees, which in 1955 had won the American League title six times in the previous eight years.

"Obviously, the Yankees aren't what they were when we first wrote it, but that doesn't matter," Abbott said. "It is about the characters — about the devil and his effect on people."

"Satan is a jolly old fellow and he's got a lot of tricks. It's all a good joke. And it's about dancing — the dancing is sensational."

When Abbott co-wrote and directed the original

Damn Yankees, it was Number 92 on his list of Broadway credits. When it opens this week at the Marquis Theatre it will number 125.

"We were able to use some new pyrotechnics this time around," Abbott said of the special effects that brought fire and light to the Marquis.

The revival includes references to the late, dreaded FBI Director J. Edgar Hoover in drag and to Senator Joe McCarthy's cold war-era witch hunt that would not have played well in the 1950s. There's even a

little male nudity, a bit that delighted the preview crowd.

Bebé Neuwirth, who won two Emmys on Cheers playing Lilith, the psychiatrist wife of Dr. Frazier Crane, stars as Lola, the devil's seductive assistant who was played by Gwen Verdon in the original play and subsequent movie.

The role of Applegate, the devil (Ray "My Favourite Martian" Walton in the original) went to Victor Garber, a Broadway veteran who has been nominated three times for a Tony.

He and Neuwirth will probably both be nominated again but without the script doctoring, the new lines and new book by Abbott and director Jack O'Brien, the play could have been rusty.

Rust is not, however, an Abbott trait and he's been around long enough to know how to make a hit, age or not.

His 106 years means when Abbott first played Broadway, as an actor in The Misleading Lady, Babe Ruth, the greatest Yankee of all, was an 18-year-old without a pro contract.

Ruth, who entered the Baseball Hall of Fame in 1936, has been dead for 46 years.

When Abbott won the Pulitzer for Fiorello in 1959, Mickey Mantle, the greatest

player of the Damn Yankee era, was 28, in his prime. Mantle, who entered the Hall of Fame in 1974, has been retired for 28 years.

When Abbott directed On Your Toes to a Tony in 1983, Reggie Jackson, the greatest Yankee of the current era, was 37 and had already been traded to the California Angels. Jackson, who entered the Hall of Fame last year, has been retired for seven years.

Abbott's Hall of Fame numbers include (as a writer and/or director) The Panama Game, A Funny Thing Happened On The Way To The Forum, Pal Joey, A Tree Grows In Brooklyn, Life With Father and on and on.

But now, George Abbott says, he's getting old.

"I'm afraid I'll fall down and won't be able to get up," he says. "When I was 100, I felt just fine, now I'm getting weak."

That may be because earlier this year he had a pacemaker installed, replacing one that was put in when he was 96.

"This time they put a computer chip in there. Last time they put in a pacemaker with a 10-year battery. But I outlived it," Abbott says with a laugh that sounds a lot like the cackle you hear at the Marquis coming from a certain Mr. Applegate.

Chart-busting monks make international debut

By Tracey Ober
Reuter

SANTO DOMINGO DE SILOS, Spain — The pop music term "classic hits" has taken on a new meaning with the international release of centuries-old Gregorian chants recorded in Spain by Benedictine monks.

The recordings, made in the Abbey of Silos in northern Spain, have been surprisingly popular among Spaniards in the 16 to 26 age group who are more used to rhythm-driven music videos.

Their phenomenal success is focusing international attention on the 36-member community of monks that has been quietly studying religious manuscripts for more than 1,000 years.

"We are surprised by the success and delighted that people enjoy the chants, but if the press comes here every day like today, it would disturb our peace and serenity," said Father Miguel Vivanco.

When the producers announced they were launching the chants worldwide, some 100 journalists from international television, radio and news organisations invaded the tiny town of Silos to find out the secret of their success.

They thrust microphones and cameras into the faces of the startled monks, who eschew publicity and rarely venture out of the abbey. Attendance at their midday mass has grown as their music has risen on the Spanish charts, but their serene routine of prayer and study has remained unchanged.

"Do you want to be a rock star?" asked one journalist.

"No, I'm just a monk. This is not singing, it's a form of prayer for me," said Father Miguel.

The set of two compact discs, which includes four recordings made in the abbey since 1973, has sold 300,000 copies in Spain since November, making

two platinum and one gold disc in pop chart sales and, on classical charts, platinum 12 times over. It edged out popular Cuban vocalist Gloria Estefan from the top spot in the Spanish charts for six consecutive weeks.

The producers believe the monks' plainsong offers a tranquil alternative to discordant, rebel music such as grunge, "batalao" and rap. "The new generation is hungry for spirituality,"

Twentieth century rock and pop has totally lost touch with the public," said Rafael Perez Arroyo, classical music director for the recording company, EMI.

Gambling that the chants are more than a passing fashion, the producers are aggressively marketing them overseas as the antidote to a hectic society which is starting to look inward as the new century nears. United States publicity reads "prepare for the new millennium."

Gregorian chant conductor Ismael Fernandez De La Cuesta explains that the intensity of the chant, which was used widely before Latin masses were largely replaced by vernacular services in the 1960s, speaks to that inner person.

He said the Santo Domingo De Silos monks were particularly adept at interpreting the chants to evoke an internal response.

Barely aware of the interest they have created, the black-hooded monks gather seven times a day in a spartan, stone church. They alternately stand while chanting prayers.

The monks, whose age is 44, on daily routine just have since adopted strict rules of the time Order in 9th.

It's a hard bodily commitment, monks' main lack of heat, spiritual reality more.

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Abd said the us-ri, convent aid is.

The first record commemorates the fifth century birth of Saint Benedict, founder of the Benedictine Order, and to celebrate Christmas and Easter.

The monks are to give up recording for the time being.

"We are just dedicated to prayer, that is what we do," said Father Eduardo.

Piano rolls of Gershwin hit top of charts

By Samuel Fromartz
Reuter

NEW YORK — American composer George Gershwin, who died more than 50 years ago, is topping the music charts again — thanks to a unique combination of musical recording technologies that span the 20th century.

Gershwin Plays Gershwin: The Piano Rolls utilises music technologies from the beginning and end of the century to revisit the piano rolls he created 70 to 80 years ago for player

pianos. The compact disc from Elektra Nonesuch Records rose to the top of the classical music charts last month — perhaps the first time since the 1920s that piano rolls have caught the imagination of an American audience.

The collection includes Gershwin's first published song, When You Want 'Em You Can't Get 'Em, which was made into a piano roll in 1916, when the composer was just 17, but never before recorded.

Also included are Rhapsody In Blue, probably Gershwin's best known work,

and An American In Paris, an elaborate and stunning orchestral work played on two pianos.

Gershwin died in 1937. Billboard magazine reported in its Jan. 29 issue that the rolls were the top-selling classical recording and were number two in a wider category after the movie soundtrack from Schindler's List.

One reason the rolls have become so popular is that they sound so rich and varied — anything but the clunky pounding one might expect on an antique player

piano.

Piano rolls were found just about everywhere in the early 20th century, from saloons and concert halls to the homes of wealthy listeners. They were played back on player pianos and were prevalent until the phonograph and radio were introduced around 1930.

For the recording, music scholar Artis Wodehouse gathered the piano rolls from collectors around the world and played them back on a Yamaha Disklavier, a computerised grand piano that plays music digitally recorded on floppy disks.

AIDS discoverer seeks cash for pioneering research

PARIS (R) — The French discoverer of the AIDS virus has appealed for international funding to pay for research to check its explosive spread worldwide.

Professor Luc Montagnier, in an interview to mark the first year of his World Foundation for AIDS Research and Prevention, said he planned to build research centres for people infected with the virus HIV in France and the Ivory Coast.

He acknowledged he had raised only a fraction of the money needed to fund the project.

The centres could play a key role in helping increase the life expectancy of those contaminated by the HIV virus that causes AIDS, he said.

"The problem with AIDS research is that we have no time to waste. We have to go as fast as possible in both the search for therapy and for a vaccine," said Prof. Montagnier, a Pasteur Institute researcher who identified HIV in 1983.

"The plan is for the research centres to take in HIV-infected patients who are not very ill, and to have a laboratory on site which would carry out tests we have designed to find the best therapy possible," he said.

The World Health Organisation (WHO) says the number of people contaminated by the HIV virus

will grow from 10 million to 40 million by the end of the decade.

For those infected with the HIV virus, there is usually a 10-year "silent period" before the virus leads to AIDS (acquired immune deficiency syndrome). Prof. Montagnier said researchers did not know how to intervene during this period.

"The blood cells we have to study in AIDS research die very quickly. Having the laboratories close to the patients, in the same building, would be very important," he said.

Within two years, as opposed to the five-year delay in current experiments, researchers could find the best combination of therapy techniques, he said.

Prof. Montagnier said on launching his foundation, associated with the U.N. Educational, Scientific and Cultural Organisation (UNESCO), that he would seek to promote bold research that official institutes were reluctant to undertake.

Asked if the centres would be the first of their kind, he answered: "To my knowledge, yes. There are already campuses with laboratories close by. But they are not integrated and they are on a small scale."

The foundation has so far raised only four million francs (\$690,000), Prof. Montagnier said. He said he needed 100 million francs (\$17 million) to pay for a

centre to be built at Paris' private St Joseph Hospital.

Another centre would be built in Abidjan with funding by African banks including the African Development Bank. Prof. Montagnier said it would boost

research into the history of HIV infection in Africa.

The continent is the hardest hit but least able to fight the disease.

Since the HIV virus identified by Prof. Montagnier hit Africa some 15 years

ago, more than eight million people have been infected in sub-Saharan Africa — more than half the HIV-positive people in the world.

Prof. Montagnier says scientists have hit a dead

end in their efforts to produce an effective anti-AIDS vaccine and must now explore new ways of making one work.

"This is the time to rethink the vaccine because the first avenues we ex-

plored are wrong. They have reached a dead end," Prof. Montagnier told Reuters.

Vaccines work by injecting viral proteins into the body to stimulate the immune system to produce antibodies that protect cells from invading viruses, such as the HIV virus that causes AIDS.

Prof. Montagnier said vaccines tested so far on volunteers have succeeded in triggering the production of antibodies against only one strain of HIV and not the hundreds of others that exist.

"We made vaccines that only protect against one strain, not the others. Therefore they are useless," he said.

He stressed that these first vaccines, while not reliable in protecting against AIDS, have advanced research efforts and will contribute to developing a successful vaccine.

Researchers have now found so many different strains of HIV that it would be impossible for a single vaccine to generate antibodies against all of them — not to mention those still not identified.

Prof. Montagnier said researchers should try to develop vaccines with different aims. Such as to make mucus membranes — where sexual transmission takes place — able to defend themselves.

People should not pin too

high hopes on a vaccine because there was no way of knowing when one might be developed, he said.

"I'm not saying there won't be a vaccine. In any case it will take a long time and it won't solve every problem. We have to foresee living with the virus for a long time to come," he said.

Prof. Montagnier discussed logistical problems in developing efficient vaccination programmes in Third World countries where AIDS is spreading most rapidly.

"Even if there was a vaccine that worked in the laboratory. It would take years to distribute it so that it could play a role in stemming the epidemic."

Researchers have warned that a vaccine could raise complex problems for health policymakers that include how to finance vaccination programmes and liability issues for manufacturers.

When Prof. Montagnier is not flying around the world raising money for research, he is in his laboratory exploring evidence that certain bacteria must be present when HIV invades the body.

"I am realistic," Prof. Montagnier said. "All avenues must be explored at the same time. We don't know which one will be the right one. But I think that we will succeed. That we will have a vaccine."

AIDS spreading fastest among heterosexuals

ATLANTA (R) — Researchers have reported that for the first time AIDS is spreading fastest among heterosexuals who have no reported contact with two high-risk groups — intravenous drug users and bisexual men.

The U.S. Centres for Disease Control and Prevention (CDC), said a 1993 survey shows that, by a conservative estimate, nine per cent, or 9,300, of 103,500 new AIDS cases last year arose from heterosexual contact, up from 1.9 per cent in 1985.

The proportion of AIDS cases involving homosexual contact between men fell below 50 per cent for the first time, from 66.5 per cent in 1992 to 46.6 per cent, according to the study.

But most significant are figures showing that the biggest group of heterosexual cases — 49.7 per cent — consists of people with HIV-infected sexual partners whose risk for contracting the disease was unknown or went unreported.

Up to now, AIDS among heterosexuals has been attributed largely to contact with intravenous drug users, a category that represented 42.3 per cent of heterosexually transmitted AIDS cases in 1993.

Patricia Flemming, chief of reporting and analysis for the CDC's HIV/AIDS Division, said the findings could mean the disease is breaking free of traditional risk groups and beginning to spread more broadly through the heterosexual community.

But she said the continued prevalence of AIDS among minorities and women led researchers to suspect that many more cases involve drug users and bisexuality than are being reported.

"We're monitoring this group because if it turns out that the partners have been injecting-drug users or bisexual men, then we're still seeing primary HIV transmission," Ms. Flemming said. "But if not, then we're seeing a broader transmission into the heterosexual population."

Women make up 66 per cent of all heterosexually transmitted AIDS cases and up to now have largely contracted the disease from drug users or bisexual men.

But the new figures, which show increasing rates among teenagers and young adults, could indicate that women in the same category are now transmitting the disease to the general heterosexual population.

"We don't want the public to get the message that it is only an epidemic of gay men and injecting-drug users," said Ms. Flemming.

Acquired immune deficiency syndrome (AIDS) is a fatal disease caused by the HIV virus, which spreads through the transfer of bodily fluids.

Heterosexuals with the highest risk for HIV infection are teenagers. Adults with more than one sexual partner, people who suffer from other sexually transmitted diseases and others who live in areas where AIDS is prevalent, particularly the south and the northeast.

Overall, the CDC study showed a 111 per cent rise in the number of AIDS cases reported in the United States. But the agency pointed out that the figures were skewed by a 1993 case redefinition that dramatically increased the numbers.

Based on the pre-1993 AIDS surveillance definition, the total number of cases declined two per cent.

An aspirin a day: Better than apple?

By Jane E. Brody

NEW YORK — "Cheap 100-Year-Old Household Drug Found to Fight Heart Attacks, Strokes, Cancer, Etc." sounds like a too-good-to-be-true headline.

But dozens of studies involving more than a million people have hailed such a

drug. It is none other than ordinary aspirin, the standby for reducing pain, fever and inflammation.

The findings of recent studies strongly suggest that an aspirin a day — or at least every other day — may be better than an apple at keeping the doctor away.

Aspirin, these studies in-

dicates, can reduce a person's chances of suffering a heart attack or stroke and of developing cancers of the colon and other digestive organs.

It may also improve brain function in people with dementia who have suffered little strokes, ward off or reduce the severity of mig-

raine headaches and help prevent hazardous high blood pressure in pregnant women. Also being studied are aspirin's possible roles in preventing cataracts and averting recurrences of gallstones.

And, in general, these benefits accrue from very low doses of the drug,

known chemically as acetylsalicylic acid, derived from a substance in the bark of the willow tree that was used medicinally by the Greek physician Hippocrates in the 5th century B.C.

But aspirin did not officially enter the medical armamentarium until the 1890s, when a chemist who worked for the Bayer Division of a German pharmaceutical company developed it partly out of a desire to relieve his father's painful, crippling arthritis.

Hailed as the closest thing to a pain-relieving panacea, aspirin soon became one of the world's most widely used drugs.

When scientists in the 1960s and 1970s finally unraveled how aspirin works chemically in the body, the drug assumed a whole new life. Aspirin was found to block the production of substances called prostaglandins. Among many other actions, prostaglandins promote the clumping of blood cells called platelets, a crucial step in the formation of blood clots that could precipitate heart attacks and strokes.

In a five-year study of 22,000 middle-aged doctors, those who took one ordinary aspirin tablet every other day suffered 40 per cent fewer heart attacks than those given a look-alike dummy medication. A similar placebo-controlled study is now under way in women.

It has already been noted in a six-year study of 90,000 nurses that those who said they took one to six aspirins a week suffered 25 per cent fewer heart attacks than nonaspirin users.

Aspirin had previously been found to be effective in treating heart attacks; when given within hours of an attack (the sooner the better), it was shown to reduce cardiovascular deaths by 23 per cent and reduce deaths by 25 per cent. And when taken regularly by heart attack patients, it reduced cardiovascular deaths by 23 per cent and reduced the risk of a second nonfatal attack as well as nonfatal strokes by nearly 50 per cent.

Based on these findings, experts have urged that a supply of aspirin be kept wherever a heart attack vic-

tim might not be able to receive immediate medical attention.

The latest excitement surrounds the observation that regular users of aspirin have reduced rates of cancers of the colon, rectum, stomach and esophagus. These cancers combined cause about 81,000 deaths a year in the United States.

Colorectal cancer alone is the United States' second leading cause of cancer deaths and the leading cancer killer among nonsmokers.

The most telling study to date, conducted by the American Cancer Society, involved more than 660,000 men and women whose health status has been monitored for a decade.

It suggested that as aspirin use rose, the risk of cancer death fell; those who used aspirin 16 or more times a month were about half as likely to die of colon cancer as nonusers.

Looking at all four digestive system cancers together, cancer society researchers found a 40 per cent lower death rate among men and women who used aspirin 16 or more times a month for at least one year. And the longer aspirin has been used, the lower the risk, they reported.

Aspirin may also be useful in fighting cancer. It stimulates production of two cancer-fighting components of the immune system: gamma interferon and interleukin-2. Researchers are now studying its effect as an adjunct to conventional treatment.

Despite its long history and popularity, aspirin does have side effects that can become serious in some people. It increases bleeding tendencies and in some people causes bleeding in the stomach, an effect that can often be countered by using enteric-coated aspirin.

Preventive aspirin therapy is most often recommended for men over 40 and women over 50 who have one or more major risk factors for heart disease, including smoking, a family history of heart attack before 55, high blood pressure, unfavourable cholesterol levels, obesity or diabetes — The New York Times.

Thoughts for this week

The essence of taste is suitability. Divest the word of its prim and priggish implications, and see how it expresses the mysterious demand of the eye and mind for symmetry, harmony and order — *Edith Wharton, American author (1862-1937).*

To have reason to get up in the morning, it is necessary to possess a guiding principle, a belief of some kind, a bumper sticker, if you will — *Judith Guest, American author (1936-).*

There may be peace without joy, and joy without peace, but the two combined make happiness — *John Buchan, 1st baron tweedsmuir, Scottish author (1875-1940).*

Wisdom is divided into two parts, (a) having a great deal to say, and yet not saying it — *Anonymous.*

ANSWERS

BANK OF KNOWLEDGE

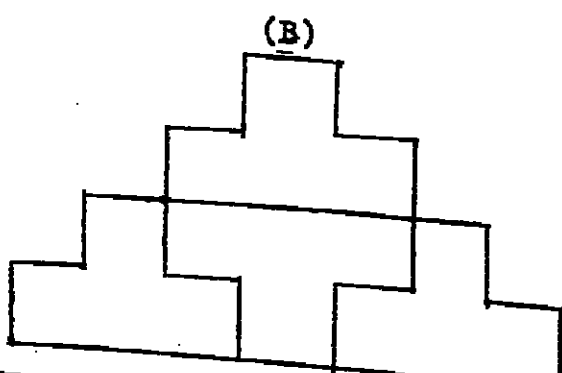
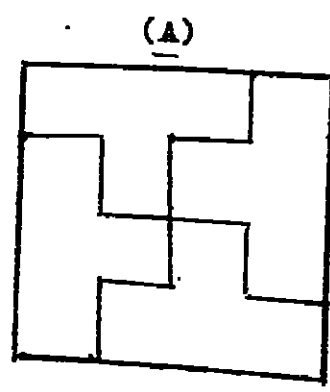
- Charles Dickens
- Fireworks.
- A bicycle. The penny-farthing had one large wheel in front and a small wheel behind.
- Andrew Barton Paterson who wrote *Waltzing Matilda*. Other ballads he wrote are *The Man From The Snowy River* and *Clancy Of The Overflow*.
- John Bull.
- Birds.

★ ★ ★ ★

PUZZLES

(A) Hemlock. cHestnut — pinE — eIm — mapLe — willOw — hiCkory — oak

(B) The solution is shown in the diagram below:



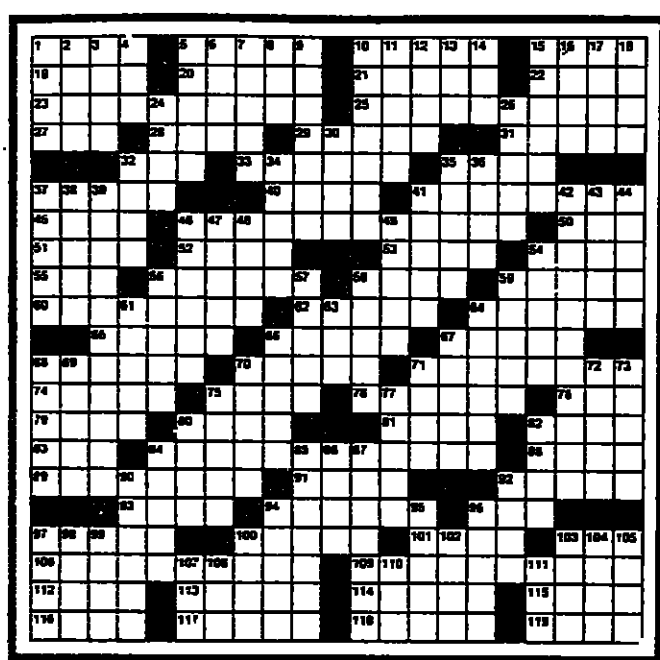
WEEKEND CROSSWORD

QUESTIONABLE DEFS

By Harold B. Counts

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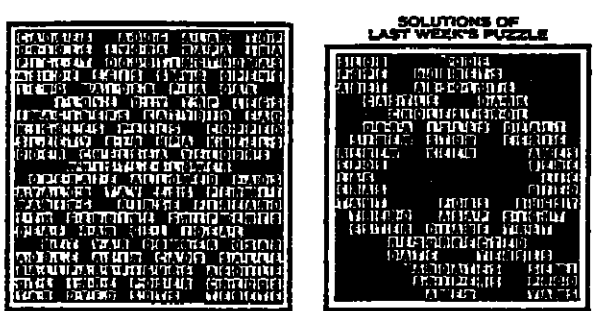


Last Week's Cryptograms

1. Recycling of stale air in fuel-efficient buildings is being blamed for many cases of cancer.
2. Young yogi was dieting on only egg yolks and yogurt when he died in New York.
3. As flashy circus parade took a circuitous trip around the dim city streets, monkeybusiness lit up faces.
4. Do we have any TV programs which are more idiotic than happy game shows?

CRYPTOGRAMS

1. ESUM LJDQ EPUUPV JAQPN ISSM CUPWDM CSV WMPDWCWEJHWS LPSVPEJAKWDI KWA EKPEQ. —By Earl Ireland
2. E YALT KGART AK E GEOMTRICK SCOMT YUEY SEL KTY E RIY IQ YUALDE KYOEADUY. —By Barbara J. Ruger
3. FMIL CMQZP TROO YFLPL UNTL COMSLAP BLOOMS GRNPLF WRY MYFLAP TROO YFLI WORTZLBLEG PHPRUP. —By Ed Haddleton
4. LOAFING OLAFING DIFYAR JG OJOL JLC CLGINLAQNP MYFF NFMNBU NDDING PJ CI CLUB. —By Frank N. Stein



Created equal?

By Richard Harwood

JOURNALISTS have trouble defining the commodity we call news.

Sometimes we'll say, "It's what we (editors) say it is." Others are prone to quote former Supreme Court Justice Potter Stewart's definition of pornography: "I can't define it, but I know it when I see it."

There is confusion as well over the elementary question of who is or isn't a journalist. Are Barbara Walters, Geraldo and Bob Woodward in the same line of work? Is Diane Sawyer, a former Miss Teenage America, paid \$5 million to \$7 million a year by ABC News because she is a great reporter, or because she is an attractive personality with a gift for gab?

The ethics of "checkbook journalism" is a factor in this disagreement, but the real questions have to do with definitions.

Deciding What's News, a study of American journalism, tells us that "news," as reflected in the networks and news magazines, is a very limited concept. These media, as well as our leading newspapers, believe that news is primarily accounts of what political and cultural celebrities say and do — presidents, presidential candidates, members of Congress and other federal and state officials.

Between 70 per cent to 85 per cent of all "news" stories involve these elites. Ordinary people — the unknowns who are not rich or powerful but who include the vast majority of Americans — get short shrift. They make the news when they are involved in protests, strikes and riots or assume the role of "victims," criminals and moral deviants.

More than half of all "news" stories are generated by press releases and staged events, such as press conferences, "government decisions, proposals and ceremonies" or by "government conflicts and disagreements, personnel decisions and 'crises, scandals and investigations.'"

The result is that "ordinary people never come into the news except as statistics. How ordinary people work, what they do outside working hours, in their families, churches, clubs and other organisations, and how they relate to govern-

ment and public agencies hardly ever makes the news."

So domestic "news" for the American media, is "about affluent people (both black and white) almost by definition, since the main actors in the news are public officials, whose incomes are in the top 1 to 5 per cent of the income distribution."

Foreign news reflects these biases and is highly ethnocentric, dealing with "stories thought relevant to Americans or American interests; with the same themes and topics as domestic news or, when the topics are distinctive, with interpretations that apply American values."

This is the "hard news" to which established newsmen refer and that preoccupies all of the "mainstream" media — the networks, the news magazines and the national or semi-national newspapers.

The preoccupation of the despised TV "news magazines" is with "celebrities," gross deviants such as Jeffrey Dahmer and other aberrational characters, "child abusers" et al. Diane Sawyer's latest scoop was an interview with Charles Manson and a couple of his murderous followers.

The lines between "hard news" and TV magazine productions are thus "blurred," as CBS News co-anchor and managing editor Dan Rather notes, since all the mainstream media dip into both pools of what we call "news" — sensation on the one hand, and the agenda of the League of Women Voters on the other.

We in the "mainstream" media deplore the "commercialism" of "get the ratings or die." But, in fact, we are all in the same boat. We need ratings, circulation gains and the advertising they generate to survive as profitable enterprises.

"We mix entertainment with 'hard news' because 'hard news' overwhelmingly dominated by political and economic elites is not especially salable to the masses whose lives and interests are systematically ignored. They don't fit standard definitions of 'news.'"

The writer is a former ombudsman of The Washington Post. The article is reprinted from the Washington Post.

By Francis Ghiles

THE GROUPE Islamique Arme (GIA), the most radical of the religious fundamentalist groups which, since the electoral process was interrupted two years ago, has been battling with the Algerian army and security forces, stepped up its pressure on Feb. 17 when it enjoined the country's 17,000 tax officials to stop collecting taxes or risk death. The GIA's message to senior tax officials insisted that Islam did not allow the levying of taxes except the Islamic zakat. The state tax office closed their doors to the public as a result.

Parallel developments have seen the GIA force butchers to sell meat at a third of the normal price, thus forcing a number of shops in Algiers to close. Private bus companies have been ordered to segregate men and women passengers. And in many villages near Blida, French newspapers and smoking are banned, and the veil for women is all but obligatory.

The more radical Islamic factions have been waging a well orchestrated campaign against the state since January 1992. Their first targets were members of the families of security forces personnel, often policemen who were not involved in the repression being carried out by special units. Intellectuals who were outspoken in their criticism of the idea of an Islamic state followed, even when, like writer Taher Djaout, they were outspoken critics of the practices of the Algerian state.

Rachid Mimouni, one of the more outspoken critics of fundamentalist ideas who has recently sought refuge in Morocco after his daughter received death threats, has pointed out that fundamentalist pamphlets state point-blank that "those who criticise us with their pen must die by the sword".

The only time he succeeded in having a debate on radio with a radical Islamic "intellectual", his interlocutor called, on three occasions during the broadcast, for Mimouni to be murdered. The intellectuals are on the front line. They are the target of the GIA since 1992 represents a major victory for the more radical Islamic groups. "Such intolerance mirrors the intolerance so long displayed by the Algerian state and the party which, from independence in 1962 until the riots of October 1988, held a monopoly of power, is of little consolation. The Algerian population and, more recently foreign



Algerian soldiers man a checkpoint in Algiers (File photo)

Can Algeria be saved from the dinosaurs?

residents, are hostage to an ever more violent confrontation which is degenerating into what can only be called civil war. More than 3,500 Algerians have lost their lives over the past 25 months (many more according to some sources), and 30 foreigners have also died. Foreign nationals have regrouped in Algiers, Oran and Annaba and, in the case of the oil companies, moved to the comparative safety of the Sahara. No one really knows what goes on in the many small towns and villages of Africa's second largest country. Although Ramadan has brought cars and people out onto the streets of Algiers, most Algerians and those foreign diplomats who remain at their posts normally lock their front doors at dusk only to emerge the next morning.

Fear and bewilderment are written on every face, not least those of young policemen and soldiers — they are caught in a confrontation which they have not sought and the sheer savagery of both sides fills many with shame.

The determination to fight on remains — best expressed by the prime minister, Redha Malek, once his country's ambassador in Washington where he played a key role in helping secure the release of U.S. diplomats held hostage in Tehran. He is that rare man in the Algerian elite who, two years ago, questioned some of the beliefs he had held before in a book published in Algiers. He insists that he is open to dialogue but not with "terrorism". "Terrorism must be liquidated, it has crossed the threshold of barbarity."

The new head of state, General Zeroual, is, like the prime minister, a man of untested personal integrity, a senior officer who, as military commander of the city of Constantine, refused orders from the presidency to shoot at the crowds of demonstrators in October 1988. In his first address to the Algerian people in early February, he acknowledged their desire for "radical change". Security measures alone would be powerless to solve the deep political, economic and cultural crisis which has engulfed

the country.

Yet Zeroual and other senior officers face a cruel dilemma. How do they explain the lack of support the army lent to the bold economic and political reforms implemented by Mouloud Hamrouche between 1989 and 1991? How do they explain the backing they gave his two successors, Sid Ahmad Ghozali and Belaid Abdessalam, who between them tore up the agreement reached with the International Monetary Fund (IMF) in June 1991, and reversed economic reforms which had done away with the state monopoly on foreign trade, cut back state subsidies, devalued the dinar, opened up the country to foreign investment, handed back land expropriated in the early 1970s to its former owners and allowed the press a measure of freedom equalled in few places in the Arab World?

Senior Algerian officials carry on making fools of themselves in a manner which defies belief. Two weeks ago, the director of the treasury, Baba Ahmad, solemnly announced that the

country's decision to negotiate with the IMF had been taken "freely" — even illiterate Algerians know this to be the exact opposite of the truth in a year when servicing the foreign debt of \$26bn will absorb the country's entire oil and gas income. Many Algerians noted their minister of the economy's declaration to the Washington Post that Algeria would only accept a form of IMF "medicine" defined in such a way that it does not bring about any kind of social unrest. In 1991, Benhachenchou was vitriolic in attacking the agreement Hamrouche signed with the IMF.

Meanwhile, Algerians face all the disadvantages of devaluation and belt-tightening and none of the advantages. The price of onions has nearly trebled since last December, that of coffee, when it can be found, has doubled, sugar has gone up 50 per cent, and 94 per cent of last year's 118bn dinar budget deficit is accounted for by subsidies to loss-making state companies. Privately sold goods such as car batteries and light bulbs are cheaper

and of higher quality than those sold in state shops. Algeria's economic managers have succeeded over the last three years in accumulating all the adverse effects of an economic readjustment programme and none of its benefits. That is the nature of the Algerian miracle. It makes one senior Algerian observer note that this country is coming to look like Jurassic Park — a collection of dinosaurs. Such a comment is however, unfair to many officials, people of high personal integrity. Yet, collectively, the *nomenklatura* has proved quite incapable of meeting the challenge.

Western governments today despair of Algeria's incapacity to launch bold economic reforms. They will not be happy to see radical Muslim groups share in or take over power.

They do not disagree with Prime Minister Malek when he says that Algeria is "bearing the cost of maintaining stability in North Africa. But they are suffering from what one observer called 'metal fatigue'."

Middle East International

Peres: Some steps possible

(Continued from page 1)

for reducing tensions there by taking out the 450 Jews who live in six buildings scattered among the 110,000 Arabs in the occupied West Bank town.

Mr. Peres also rejected the idea of an armed international force, saying they had proved ineffective against violence in Somalia, Bosnia and elsewhere.

In Hebron, he said Israel would take immediate, legal steps to meet Palestine Liberation Organisation (PLO) security concerns such as the measures already taken to ban extremist Jewish groups and confiscate submachine guns from those advocating anti-Arab violence. But he would not specify further steps.

The foreign minister said Israel had made some suggestions to the PLO about who might serve as the foreign observers agreed on for the autonomy areas of the Gaza Strip and Jericho. He said although Hebron was not included in the declaration of principles and foreign observers could be deployed there under special arrangements.

He said the suggestions revolved around the countries donating economic aid, but the observers could not be either soldiers or diplomats.

"In Hebron, we can do it as an addition," he said. "We can take additional steps in Hebron."

Mr. Peres did not elaborate, but he said any action Israel decided to take would be implemented only after the PLO returned to the negotiating table and in consultation with the organisation.

The Palestinians have refused to return to the negotiations on implementing the September Israel-PLO autonomy accord due to the Feb. 25 massacre.

ports said Mr. Arafat also wanted the curfew lifted from Hebron. The residents have been kept indoors since the massacre, sometimes allowed out for an hour or two per day to get supplies.

Palestinians stress that Mr. Arafat cannot return to the peace talks empty-handed, otherwise he would risk losing the local constituency needed to allow him to govern effectively once autonomy starts.

Major General Amnon Shabak, the army's deputy chief of staff and top negotiator, told Hebron leaders Tuesday that the city's turn would come for autonomy after self-rule is implemented in the Gaza Strip and Jericho area, Israel radio reported.

In a PLO attempt to show that it was not intransigent, four top leaders of Mr. Arafat's Fatah faction from the Gaza Strip accepted an unprecedented invitation and met with Labour Party legislators at Israel's parliament.

"The head of the PLO cannot, after this incident, continue down the same path under the same conditions," Hisham Abdul Razik, head of the PLO in Gaza, told the legislators in the fluent Hebrew he learned during two decades in Israeli jails.

Sufian Abu Zideh, spokesman of Gaza's Fatah office, told reporters that the meeting was "not part of the current talks in Tunis and Washington."

Right-wing legislators attacked their counterparts. The Tsomet party issued a statement saying bringing a terrorist to the cradle of Israeli democracy "is a disgrace both to the house and to those who invited him from the Labour Party."

Mr. Razik spent 20 years in jail for trying to blow up an Israeli bus in the 1970s, but was released last December after a personal appeal from Mr. Arafat. Abu Zideh served 12 years for shooting suspected collaborators and was released last April.

The other two Palestinians, Hisham Dasuki and Diab Louth, also have served time in Israeli jails. The four invited the Labour Party members to visit them in Gaza.

Legislator Dalia Itzik of the ruling Labour Party said the

Palestinians were invited because the faction wanted "to hear from people on the ground."

"Even though there are between us both misunderstandings and disagreements, it is important that we talk about them directly," she added.

The Palestinian said the settlements had to go, especially those in the occupied Gaza Strip.

"Settlements and peace are impossible in the territories," said Mr. Dasuki.

Clinton, Rabin want talks resumed

(Continued from page 1)

day of peace."

He called on Mr. Arafat to end his boycott of negotiations over Palestinian self-rule on the West Bank and Gaza.

"We do not seek to rule them anymore," he said of the Palestinians who live in the occupied territories.

Mr. Rabin again expressed sorrow for the Hebron massacre. But he said security for Jews required attention as much as security for Palestinians.

"Security is a two-way street," he said.

Asked about the specific suggestion that PLO police be allowed to operate in Hebron, he said that security forces must be under a single chain of command and that the government in the West Bank is the Israeli military government.

Mr. Clinton offered U.S. help to Israel and Syria and deplored the breakdown in Mideast talks on all fronts.

"The events of the past several weeks have demonstrated the risk in this great undertaking," he said.

Earlier Wednesday, Mr. Rabin left open the possibility of eventually moving Jewish settlers from the occupied West Bank town of Hebron as part of a broader peace agreement.

In a recorded interview to be broadcast Wednesday night, Mr. Rabin was asked whether he was ready to order out the Jewish settlers to help meet Palestinian security concerns.

"Not at this stage," he said on the Public Broadcasting Service programme "Charlie Rose."

"I'm not saying what will happen once we'll have a permanent solution," he said. He added that "from a municipal point of view," Hebron was populated by about 100,000 Palestinians and 415 Israelis.

"I believe the figures speak for themselves," he said, without elaborating. Mr. Rabin was interviewed late Tuesday night, shortly after he vowed not to compromise Israel's security as he seeks to revive stalled Mideast peace talks (see page 2).

Mr. Rabin said he believed that Israel and the PLO had been on the verge of an agreement on limited self-rule in Jericho and the Gaza Strip.

Mr. Arafat has called Mr. Clinton to save peace process.

Mr. Arafat made the appeal in a letter sent to Mr. Clinton on Tuesday, the Palestinian news agency Wafa said on Wednesday.

"Abu Ammar (Arafat) demanded in his letter to President Clinton, considering the fact that the (PLO-Israel) accord was signed under his sponsorship ... and that the United States is a co-sponsor, to act by deploying efforts and using his influence to save the

peace process from the impasse reached after this savage slaughter," Wafa said.

Mr. Arafat also denounced what the agency called Israeli manoeuvres to escape implementation of the self-rule agreement.

He also mentioned in his letter to Mr. Clinton "the difficulties at the U.N. Security Council and the obstacles for the adoption of a resolution condemning this savage slaughter and deciding an international protection for our people and our holy sites," Wafa said.

Interviewed by Reuters, a senior Arafat aide challenged Israel and the United States to save the peace talks by ensuring Palestinians in the occupied territories receive international protection.

"There was a massacre in Hebron and until today, we do not have any guarantees that another one would not happen tomorrow or the day after," said Ahmad Tibi, Mr. Arafat's special adviser on Israeli affairs.

"What's wrong with sending a 200-member international force as a first group to protect our people in Hebron," he said.

"The ball is now in Washington, in both the Israeli and American courts, which in fact are one court."

If the situation stays as it is, I do not see any room for renewing the talks and the Israeli government — which had chances to take effective decisions but chose not to — would be responsible," Dr. Tibi said.

Probe finds troops' role in bloodbath

(Continued from page 1)

close to drawing its conclusions.

The head of Hebron's Islamic trust, Salah Natche, the mosque's director, Atef Hamouri, and three Waqf guards were to appear before the Israeli commission.

Mohammad Abu Saleh, one of the guards called to appear, told the Associated Press after the massacre that Goldstein had pushed past him into the carpeted prayer room to open fire on Muslim worshippers.

Waqf guards are unarmed but Jewish worshippers were allowed to take their weapons into the site.

Mr. Abu Saleh said Goldstein had reloaded his weapon and also hurled three grenades. The army has said that only bullets were found.

Ety Eshed, spokeswoman for the justice ministry, expressed regret that the Palestinians failed to show up.

"The inquiry is trying to clarify the truth. It is a state inquiry, appointed by the head of the supreme court and not a government commission as the Palestinians claim," Mr. Eshed said.

"The inquiry is making every effort to hear anyone who can contribute to the truth and will continue to call anyone it thinks can contribute to uncovering the circumstances of the massacre," she added.

Lawyer Richard Bardenstein said he did not think the lack of Palestinian testimony would "have an effect in terms of the recommendations" of the commission or would "have any effect on its legitimacy."

Bank to reopen in Ramallah

(Continued from page 1)

bank, the Commercial Bank of Palestine, with a \$14 million capital is also awaiting Israeli approval to start operations in the occupied territories.

Despite the signing of the Dec. 1 memo of understanding with Israel, Jordan held back

going ahead with the reopening of the branches upon the request of the PLO, which is poised to lead Palestinian autonomy in the Gaza Strip and Jericho in line with the Sept. 13 Israel-PLO agreement.

Jordan and the PLO signed an economic cooperation

agreement on Jan. 7, allowing the Kingdom's banks to reopen their closed branches in the occupied territories.

Procedures related to new branches will be dealt with by a Jordanian-Palestinian committee on monetary and banking affairs, the committee has not met yet, PLO officials said.

Aziz-lobbies U.N. envoys

(Continued from page 1)

cooperated on several fronts. The 15-nation council reviews the sanctions every two months and routinely renews them with a statement saying Iraq has not complied with all U.N. requirements. Renewal is expected Friday, as well.

The ruling Baath Party newspaper Al Thawra, quoting Foreign Minister Mohammad Saeed Al Sahaf, said Baghdad had complied with the ceasefire provisions that have blocked oil exports.

"They demanded that we declare our nuclear programme as a whole and we gave them the details of that programme ... then Iraq was told that it had to accept Resolution 715 regarding monitoring and we agreed," Mr. Sahaf told the newspaper.

Profits of U.S. banks soar to record \$43.4b in 1993

WASHINGTON (AP) — The nation's commercial banks earned a record \$43.4 billion last year, far surpassing the old record, and a top regulator said the industry's prosperity should continue this year.

"It's very difficult to anticipate another record year...but I think we'll see earnings remain very solid," said Andrew Hove, acting chairman of the Federal Deposit Insurance Corp. (FDIC).

The FDIC said Tuesday that 1993 earnings marked a 36 per cent improvement over the previous record of \$32 billion, set in 1992, which was a 79 per cent increase over the \$17.9 billion earned in 1991.

In the fourth quarter, earnings totalled \$11.1 billion, just

shy of the \$11.5 billion record set in the third quarter.

Analysts said banks could anticipate another good year in 1994 but in the long term, they face stiff competition from mutual funds and other non-bank rivals.

"They're eating the lunch of lots of banks, stealing their depositors...and stealing their loan customers with better rates and better service and more interesting products," said David Cates, chairman of Ferguson and Co., a consulting firm.

But 1993 was an extraordinary year for banks by almost any measure. Ninety-five per cent of all banks reported profits, the highest share since 1980, and two of every three

banks improved over 1992.

Return on assets, a standard measure of profitability, hit 1.21 per cent, topping one per cent for the first time since the FDIC began operating in 1934.

Loan losses totalled \$17.5 billion, the lowest in six years. The industry's capital cushion exceeded eight per cent of assets for the first time since 1963.

The number of failures, 42, was the lowest since 1982. No banks have failed so far this year. The number of problem banks declined from 787 with \$488 billion in assets at the end of 1992, to 426 with \$242 billion in assets at the end of 1993.

Analysts attributed banks' performance to the growing

economy and to the wide spread between short-term interest rates on deposits and long-term rates on loans.

The number of commercial banks at the end of the year, 10,957, was the lowest since the creation of the FDIC. However, assets held by the industry, \$3.7 trillion, increased 5.7 per cent over a year earlier.

Commercial and industrial loans rose 0.5 per cent to \$539 billion, the first increase in four years.

The FDIC also reported that the nation's 2,264 savings and loans and savings banks earned \$1.8 billion in the fourth quarter, bringing full-year profits to a record \$7 billion in 1993, up from \$6.7 billion in 1992.

Russia eyes CIS property as debt for fuel grows

MOSCOW (R) — Russia said Wednesday it plans to put pressure on former Soviet republics pleading poverty and refusing to pay for oil and gas supplies.

Moscow's neighbouring fuel clients which have no cash may be asked for property to pay their bills, the fuel and energy ministry said.

At the end of 1993, Russian fuel producers were owed more than two trillion roubles (\$1.2 billion) by the countries Moscow calls "the near abroad" — the rest of the Commonwealth of Independent States (CIS) and the Baltic states.

Ukraine owes more than half of this and is struggling to avert a threatened April 10 cut-off in gas supplies by Russia's Gazprom company.

"The problem of reducing the debt of the countries of the 'near abroad' calls for decisions on an inter-governmental level," the ministry's Infotek Information Service said.

"If they don't have the cash, then they will have to offer something else...like property," a ministry spokesman said.

The Russian ministry official said the debt was growing fast and big Western Siberian producers were demanding action.

"Workers' collectives are threatening to strike unless salaries are paid. We've got to do something," he said.

A strike by oil and gas workers planned for this week was postponed after the government gave assurances of measures to help companies unable to pay salaries for months.

No details of the measures were immediately available, but Infotek outlined some proposals for dealing with "near-abroad" debt.

In the absence of freely convertible currencies in the former Soviet republics, it said the Russian government could buy the debt of these countries for past fuel deliveries.

Russia weighs economic policies before IMF visit

MOSCOW (R) — On the eve of a visit from the head of the International Monetary Fund (IMF), Russia is looking hard at its economic policy, balancing the benefits of lower inflation with the problems high interest rates have caused.

Economics Minister Alexander Shokhin told Interfax News Agency the government had not loosened the monetary reins since key reformers left in January.

But tight monetary policies had brought both gain and pain. "I cannot say that it was correct," he said.

Economists say that high interest rates, a legacy from reformers Yegor Gaidar and Boris Fyodorov, helped bring February monthly inflation down to an 18-month low of 9.9 per cent.

But monthly interest rates well above new inflation rates have been one factor behind a sharp fall in industrial output, with February output 24 per cent below year-ago levels.

"There is a growing impres-

sion, even among reform-minded Russian economists, that reforms are simply too painful," said one Western diplomat. "They agree that a fall in output during a period of transformation is inevitable, but at the same time question whether falls of this magnitude are justified."

Complaints about the course of reforms have been getting louder since reformers were dealt a stinging blow in Russia's December parliamentary elections.

Vladimir Shumeiko, a close ally of President Boris Yeltsin and chairman of the upper house of the Russian parliament, has suggested imposing a state of economic emergency in Russia.

Mr. Shokhin's comments on economic policy came just before a five-day visit to Moscow by IMF Managing Director Michel Camdessus, who is expected to meet Prime Minister Viktor Chernomyrdin.

News of Mr. Camdessus' trip has fuelled speculation that the Washington-based organisation is ready to extend Russia a second \$1.5 billion tranche of a special fund to help the transformation from communism to capitalism.

Mr. Shokhin said last month during a meeting of economic leaders in Germany that he expected Russia to receive the money soon.

But diplomats say the IMF will want firm assurances that Russia intends to keep reforms on track before it will pledge more money to the former superpower.

Some economists say the organisation would do better to lend additional money to other former Soviet states, whose economic problems are compounded by the need to pay world prices for Russian oil and gas.

Oslo hails EU deal; opponents cry sell-out

OSLO (R) — Norway's Labour government welcomed a deal on European Union (EU) membership Wednesday but powerful opposition groups including fishermen and farmers denounced it as a sell-out.

Prime Minister Gro Harlem Brundtland announced Norway would hold a referendum on the deal — hoping to reverse polls showing that most Norwegians are opposed and that many fear membership will mean giving up sovereignty.

"We recommend that Norway seize this historic opportunity to take part in political cooperation on our continent, together with our Nordic neighbours," Ms. Brundtland said.

The EU agreed to take on Norway as a member after late-night talks Wednesday. Finland and Sweden, as well as Austria, had already agreed terms of membership, extending the EU high into the Arctic and giving it a border with Russia.

All four applicants hope to join by Jan. 1.

Opposition groups said Norway's negotiators were sacrificing vital national interests and predicted a repeat of 1972, when Norway agreed membership terms in the European Community only for voters to say "no" in a referendum.

"This is a bad agreement," said Anne Enger Lahnstein, leader of the opposition Centre Party, the largest in parliament behind the ruling Labour Party.

"This will be a fight on whether Norway will continue to be an independent nation or whether we will bind ourselves to a union," she said.

Sovereignty is a sensitive issue in Norway, which won independence from Sweden in 1905 and was occupied by the Nazis in World War II. Since saying "no" in 1972, Norway has grown rich, helped by suiting output of North Sea Oil.

"This accord is worse than I feared when we began to negotiate," said Einar Hepsøe, head of the Norwegian Fishermen's Association. "We've lost on all points."

He said Norway would give fish quotas to Spain under the deal and that it would lose control over fisheries in its northern waters — two concessions the Oslo government had pledged it would never make.

The Norwegian Farmers' Union also condemned the accord, saying Norway will be flooded by cheap food imports while Norwegian farmers, struggling with a harsh climate stretching far into the Arctic, will be driven out of business.

Mr. Brundtland disagreed. "Understanding has been shown for our vital needs, and

with regard to control over our natural resources, and we have also achieved good solutions for agriculture and regional policy," she said.

She said the deal would help ensure jobs, allow Norway to maintain its generous welfare system and let it cooperate in common challenges including peace and the environment.

A poll this month in the daily Dagbladet showed that just 23 per cent of Norwegians favoured membership, 42 per cent opposed it and 34 per cent were undecided.

Some polls, however, show Norwegians might vote "yes" if Finland and Sweden accepted membership first.

Foreign Minister Bjørn Tore Godal said a date for a referendum had not yet been discussed, but noted that it took six or seven months to organise in 1972 once a deal was ready.

HOROSCOPE

FORECAST FOR THURSDAY MARCH 17, 1994

By Thomas S. Pierson, Astrologer, Carroll Righter Foundation

GENERAL TENDENCIES: A good morning to improve public relations in your line of endeavour, and to take advantage of opportunities coming your way. Reach out to help an associate that seems to be floundering. Be wise.

ARIES: (March 21 to April 19) Being with friends and improving the association is fine today. Take pains to handle routine tasks in an efficient manner.

TAURUS: (April 20 to May 20) Show appreciation to those who have power over our affairs and gain further goodwill. Use modern methods to improve your work and be a success.

GEMINI: (May 21 to June 21) See what you can do about enlarging your vision so that you can advance in your line of endeavour and be wise to use any methods which will help get it.

MOON CHILDREN: (June 22 to July 21) Take no risks with your health at this time. Handle responsibilities more efficiently and they become easier for you to get them done.

LEO: (July 22 to August 21) Support those associates who need your assistance at this time. Listen to complaints of family members and give help where needed to solving problems.

VIRGO: (August 22 to September 22) You have to be more enthused if you are to get all the tasks done that are important to

you. Strive for increased happiness in your personal life.

LIBRA: (September 23 to October 22) Take time to put your business and financial affairs in better order. Be sure to keep promises you have made to others and you will be respected.

SCORPIO: (October 23 to November 21) Be more considerate of the needs of family members and establish more harmony at home. Avoid one who gossips too much about everything.

SAGITTARIUS: (November 22 to December 21) Discuss your views with associates and improve regular routines. Plan how to gain your most cherished aims and make the effort to make them happen.

CAPRICORN: (December 22 to January 19) Study your financial position and then confer with experts in order to improve it. Take no risks in motion at this time or there could be trouble.

AQUARIUS: (January 20 to February 19) Use tact with others and they soon will give you the favours you desire. The evening is fine for social pleasures with the one you are fond of.

PISCES: (February 20 to March 20) You are able to communicate well with associates and can advance in career matters. Sidestep a troublemaker and you will be successful.

FORECAST FOR FRIDAY MARCH 18, 1994

By Thomas S. Pierson, Astrologer, Carroll Righter Foundation

GENERAL TENDENCIES: Avoid whatever confusion is about you this morning as the Gemini Moon squares Saturn and Mars and expend your energies on the logical plane of your main interests. Obtain facts and figures.

ARIES: (March 21 to April 19) Try to please your friends today instead of talking about personal worries. Show more consideration for the loved one in your life.

TAURUS: (April 20 to May 20) Don't initiate a higher-up or you could have more trouble than you can handle. Show increased devotion to family members who are around.

GEMINI: (May 21 to June 21) Be alert to opportunities but don't jump into anything hastily. Study old situation that need clarification brings right answers.

MOON CHILDREN: (June 22 to July 21) Use care and tact in attending to promises and gain the respect of others. A new outlet can be profitable to you at this time.

LEO: (July 22 to August 21) You have to be tactful with an associate and prevent some action that could be detrimental to you both, think constructively in any project.

VIRGO: (August 22 to September 22) Quietly straighten out any errors at work and avoid getting

panicky. A fellow associate could be distraught so give words of encouragement.

LIBRA: (September 23 to October 22) You have to be more sensible where practical matters are concerned to gain your aims at this time. Be poised to any situation which could come up.

SCORPIO: (October 23 to November 21) Any situations that arise today should be considered from a standpoint of how they will affect you and family members which are around you.

SAGITTARIUS: (November 22 to December 21) Attend to duties that must be done early in the day so you'll have time for social activities and be cheerful to those around you.

CAPRICORN: (December 22 to January 19) You need to apply yourself more now to gain your cherished wishes. Sidestep one who likes to impose on you or someone will be hurt.

AQUARIUS: (January 20 to February 19) Use good common sense today, especially in the face of a possible emergency. Also, be sure to show thoughtfulness for others.

PISCES: (February 20 to March 20) Carry through with original plans even though you may be limited in some way. Use diplomacy in your business dealings so that things come your way.

"PREMI NAZIONALI PER LA TRADUZIONE" 1994

AMBASCIATA D'ITALIA CENTRO LINGUISTICO ITALIANO

IL 31 Marzo 1994 scade il Bando di Concorso per traduzioni, indetto dal Ministero per i Beni Culturali e Ambientali Italiano, e così articolato:

- Traduzioni in Lingua Italiana di un'opera letteraria o tecnico-scientifica dalla Lingua Araba;
- Traduzioni in Lingua Araba di un'opera letteraria o tecnico-scientifica Italiana;
- Editore giordano per opere di lingua italiana pubblicate in Lingua Araba.

Informazioni: Ambasciata d'Italia Tel. 638185 (c.a. prof. Emanuele Minardo) Centro Linguistico Italiano Tel. 669348 (c.a. Direttore).

THE BETTER HALF. By Harris

"I asked the waiter to bring us extra candles. I was cold."

JUMBLE THAT SCRAMBLED WORD GAME

Unscramble these four Jumbles. One letter to each square, to form four ordinary words.

CIHRB
URUGA
DEBBIA
UMCAUV

WHAT THEY CALLED THE BAKER WHO SOLD THEM STALE BREAD.

Now arrange the ordered letters to form the surprise answer, as suggested by the above cartoon.

Print answer here: A

Yesterday's Jumbles: SNOWY LATHE ISLAND ORCHID
Answer: How the silhouette artists described their work — BY A SHOW OF HANDS

Peanuts

Andy Capp

Mutt'n'Jeff

THE Daily Crossword by Betty Jorgensen

ACROSS

- 1 Across Hope
- 2 Rocky peak
- 3 Ocean as a result of effort
- 4 Where Greek met Greek
- 5 Explorer
- 6 Tactician
- 7 Between jobs
- 8 Mischief
- 9 City on the Truckee
- 10 Prudence
- 11 Traveler's advisor?
- 12 City tree
- 13 Type type: abbr.
- 14 Hawaii, once abbr.
- 15 Follower agent
- 16 Ostrich kin
- 17 Angry
- 18 Male ZZ's
- 19 Transport for S2A
- 20 British guns
- 21 Ben Adhem
- 22 Tippler
- 23 Jacob's twin
- 24 — noire
- 25 Tableland
- 26 Big —, Cal.
- 27 Way to go for seers
- 28 Crowning glory
- 29 Taj Mahal site
- 30 Where the Yuma flows
- 31 Reason d—
- 32 Military meal
- 33 Revolve a legacy
- 34 Dandelion, e.g.
- 35 Batsong
- 36 Laughing beast
- 37 Jean of films
- 38 Circus brother
- 39 See 45A
- 40 Alan or Robert
- 41 Hammer part
- 42 Clumpy one
- 43 Sing
- 44 Capital of Bahamas
- 45 Sleuths
- 46 Ham it up
- 47 Mystical writings
- 48 Earl's prof.
- 49 Mystery award
- 50 Far from
- 51 Weather —
- 52 Publisher
- 53 Jinks del
- 54 Presidential nickname
- 55 Most dire
- 56 Grocery worker
- 57 Snifter
- 58 Contents
- 59 Coal stratum
- 60 Mr. Heep
- 61 Macle
- 62 Dances
- 63 Ireland
- 64 Approximately
- 65 Political cartoonist
- 66 — fix
- 67 Legal claim
- 68 MB's org.

Yesterday's Puzzle Solved:

OLIVIA STRIED RAMA
PRIDE CHAIR ORAIN
ERIN ARIAS LURE
GASTON DOLLOR
ARD TIE
TANGENT STAIN
WEE GRATE GULL
LIM EED MAR
THE REAPS SIRE
PROMISED SCANDAL
GAIL GORE
ROMLOSAHOLM
FENT ROLIMP
PANE ALONE EVID
PAINE LORIP DEEN

Korean talks fail again

PANMUNJOM, Korea (R) — South and North Korea reported no progress again Wednesday in efforts to settle a bitter row over Pyongyang's suspected development of nuclear weapons but they agreed to try again Saturday.

There was no progress at all in today's talks. The two sides were not able to agree on any points. South Korean chief delegate Song Young-Doo told reporters at the end of a two-hour session at the border village of Panmunjom. The two sides were only able to decide to meet again on Saturday. But analysts said there was little prospect of a breakthrough in view of bad-tempered exchanges in recent days between the two arch foes.

Wednesday's meeting, the fourth this month, was aimed at clearing obstacles to a proposed exchange of special envoys as part of a regular dialogue on nuclear issues. Southern officials said the two sides spent most of the session haggling over the north's demand that they issue a joint statement expressing the "will to realise the envoy exchange" before an agreement is signed.

South rejected the call as a ploy to delay the exchange. "The problem is with North Korea's attitude. They are trying to delay the exchange," Mr. Song said. "North Korea keeps saying they want the exchange to be realised, but it does not show in their actions."

South Korea and the United States have a survey exchange programme. Southern officials said the survey exchange was now like a "dead letter" and indefinitely postponed. They said progress in the Panmunjom talks.

The latest round of talks in Panmunjom, which followed the tense Korean summit made little headway as the two sides argued over the exchange of special envoys for the exchange of prisoners of war. Seoul sees the exchange as an important step in resolving the nuclear row and improving relations between the two countries, but it has been a long time since the two sides met. North Korea threatened Tuesday to scrap the Geneva talks if Washington did not announce an agreement on resolving doubts over the North's nuclear programme. Pyongyang's official Korean Central News Agency (KCNA) commented in Tokyo, a spokesman saying the North would be unable to attend the Geneva talks if the United States did not meet its obligations.

The United States, which has led international efforts to pressure Pyongyang into renouncing its nuclear programme, on Tuesday said U.S. exports had not gotten full cooperation when inspecting seven agreed-upon nuclear sites over the past two weeks.

Russian envoy presses Yugoslav shuttle diplomacy

SARAJEVO (R) — Russian envoy Vitaly Churkin pressed his shuttle diplomacy for peace in Bosnia in talks with Serb leaders Wednesday as U.N. requests for passage of relief aid across Serb siege lines were rebuffed once again.

Mr. Churkin flew unexpectedly into Belgrade from the Croatian capital of Zagreb on the latest leg of a diplomatic mission that is being coordinated with the United States, which brokered a Croat-Muslim federation accord this month.

Officials said Mr. Churkin, Russian President Boris Yeltsin's special envoy for former Yugoslavia, met leaders of the self-styled Serb Republic of Krajina and was scheduled to see Bosnian Serb chief Radovan Karadzic later in the day.

Serbs wrested control of the Krajina region, which covers a third of Croatia, in Serb-Croat fighting that preceded the Bosnian war.

Mr. Churkin's Yugoslav shuttle, which has also taken him to Sarajevo, is aimed at drawing the Serbs — the strongest military force in the Bosnian conflict — into three-sided talks on an overall settlement.

Serb leaders have expressed fears that the U.S.-brokered Croat-Muslim federation could turn into an anti-Serb alliance. "What concerns me is how the rights of the Serbs... will be regarded and ensured in Bosnia-Herzegovina," Russian Television quoted Mr. Churkin as saying on arrival in Belgrade.

"It seems to me that it is of fundamental importance that Croats and Muslims possess sovereign rights in Bosnia-Herzegovina. It should be obvious that the Serbs have the same sovereign rights," Bosnian Serb leaders have sounded notes of moderation in recent days and Mr. Karadzic told Reuters in Belgrade Tuesday the Serbs were prepared to give up more than a fifth of the territory they control in Bosnia.

But such statements have contrasted with headline attitudes on the ground which have enraged United Nations officials. A spokesman for the office of the U.N. High Commissioner for Refugees (UNHCR) said Wednesday the Serbs had again turned down a U.N. request to allow passage of humanitarian supplies across Serb siege lines into the Muslim enclave of Maglaj.

"This is just another example of brinkmanship... where they (the Serbs) want to push the United Nations resolve to the last raw nerve, it appears to me," the UNHCR's Larry Hollingworth said in a radio interview.

There have been threats from U.N. peace force commanders to clear the passage of aid convoys by force but no military action has been taken. Asked about the use of force to get aid trucks into Maglaj, U.N. High Commissioner for Refugees Sadako Ogata said in Sarajevo: "No. We will do it through negotiations... We have been able to reach them (the people of Maglaj) through airdrops."

Maglaj has been cut off from overland aid supplies since October. A U.N. officer in Sarajevo said Wednesday that the predicament of the 19,000 civilians in the town was serious. "They are short of food. Most of all they are short of fuel. For the hospital, they are short of anaesthetics," he said.

Ms. Ogata and the U.N. commander in Bosnia, General Sir Michael Rose, toured frontline areas in Sarajevo Wednesday, including a strategic bridge that is scheduled to be opened soon under an accord between Muslims and Serbs.

The agreement on free movement in the capital, where a ceasefire has returned life to near-normal, was due to have been signed Wednesday but U.N. officials said the signing would be postponed to Thursday.

Although Maglaj has been cut off from road convoys, there have been airdrops almost every night and landing zones were marked for the first time Tuesday by a team of British soldiers helicoptered into the town.

Maglaj is one of the few active battle zones in Bosnia, where a month of intense international diplomatic activity has offered hope of peace after 23 months of ethnic war among Muslims, Serbs and Croats. Leaders of the self-styled Serb Republic of Krajina agreed Wednesday to begin talks in Croatia next week on reducing tension over Krajina.

Agreement on the talks, the first between representatives of the two sides to be held in Croatia, was announced in Belgrade by Mr. Churkin. Mr. Churkin told reporters the talks would begin at the Russian embassy in Zagreb, the Croatian capital, Tuesday.

At least 16 people have died in the region since Tuesday morning, police and officials of Mr. Mandela's African National Congress said Wednesday. Over 10,000 people have died in political violence in Natal since bitter feuding broke out nearly 10 years ago between "supporters" of the ANC and the Zulu-based Inkatha Freedom Party of Mr. Buthezi, who has refused to take part in the elections.

Inkatha spokesman Ed Tillet said Wednesday Mr. Mandela's visit to Natal was premature and would inflame the already volatile situation in the region.

"From our perspective, we do not believe it is the right time, in light of the inflammable and combustible climate in the region."

"I think obviously the levels of tension would naturally exacerbate. It is not going to take very much to set in motion a very dangerous climate in KwaZulu/Natal," Mr. Tillet told Reuters.

He said Inkatha feared the ANC had plans to destabilise the KwaZulu government to ensure it collapsed like the government in nominally-independent Bophuthatswana.

South Africa took over Bophuthatswana at the weekend and two administrators have been appointed to run the homeland after its President Lucas Mangope, a strong opponent of the ANC, was deposed after violent demonstrations in the capital Mmabatho and other towns.

Mr. Mandela received a tumultuous welcome from homeland residents when he visited Mmabatho Tuesday. Bophuthatswana's white former defence minister, Rowan Cronje, predicted Wednesday that other homeland governments could collapse in the same way under ANC pressure.

Inkatha's Tillet echoed Mr. Cronje's comments. "One can already see tentative attempts being made at destabilising the KwaZulu government. We anticipate that we are in for a rough ride in this province."

"The seed has already been planted that a similar scenario like in Bop could happen. Any attempts of that nature would be met with fierce resistance. People would be encouraged to defend the Zulu kingdom," he said.

Bophuthatswana, KwaZulu and the other eight black homelands created by Pretoria during the apartheid era are due to disappear after the April elections and nine new regions covering the whole of South Africa will emerge. ANC officials said Mr. Mandela would address a Zulu rally in the KwaZulu heartland Saturday.

The rally at Empangeni in northern Natal would promote peace in the region and also prove that the ANC had majority support among the country's nine million Zulus, the officials said.



Sarajevo jostle each other to board the first official train to drive through the main avenue, nicknamed "Snipers' Alley" (AFP photo)

Mandela heads for Zulu strongholds

DURBAN, South Africa (Agencies) — ANC leader Nelson Mandela, fresh from a triumphal visit to Bophuthatswana, headed Wednesday into strife-torn Natal, powerbase of his main black rival Zulu Chief Mangosuthu Buthezi.

Mr. Mandela was to have an election campaign meeting with leaders of Durban's important Indian community after visiting the scene of last week's horrific commuter train crash in which at least 64 people died.

More than 300 people were injured when packed carriages left the rails and smashed into an embankment in an isolated wooded valley about 20 kilometres west of Durban port. Mandela is due to meet Zulu King Goodwill Zwelithini Friday morning in Ulundi, capital of the KwaZulu black homeland, to seek peace in KwaZulu Natal before South Africa's first all-race elections on April 26-28.

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Meanwhile, after months of wrangling and hesitation, South Africa was presented Tuesday with a flag to replace the banner associated with apartheid. It is dominated by a green field at the centre shaped like a Y laid on its side. The field is surrounded by blocks of black, red and blue blocks, and set off by thin lines of gold and white.

The increase, larger in percentage terms than that for education, science or agriculture, came amid rising Asian concerns over China's military modernisation programme and lingering territorial disputes.

Mr. Qian said such concerns were unfounded, and the budget boost this year was simply intended to help the military cope with inflation and currency reforms that devalued the yuan by 33 per cent against the U.S. dollar.

"On the surface, it looks like an increase," Mr. Qian told a news conference. "But actual purchasing power has not really increased."

Diplomats say the published budget figures do not reflect accurately all of China's defence spending.

The PLA can draw upon certain other budget items for funds, and is also increasingly making money for itself with industrial and commercial ventures ranging from hotels to motorcycle factories.

Mr. Qian said the military accounted for 11 per cent of China's total budget for 1994, and military spending accounted for only 1.7 per cent of gross national product.

Asked about specific censorship, 69 per cent of the U.S. respondents said the government should be able to restrict reporting to protect military secrets. 60 per cent would allow limits on reporting to discourage terrorism, 59 per cent to restrict mentions of explicit sex and 52 per cent to control portrayals of "unnecessary violence."

Firm majorities in most of the other countries also favoured such specific restrictions. In France, 69 per cent believed in restricting military reporting, 75 per cent wanted censorship to curb racial or ethnic insults, 82 per cent said they believed in restrictions to discourage terrorism, and 67 per cent believed in restricting explicit sex.

Large majorities in all countries said the media help democracy in general. However, almost everyone complained that the press is sensational, intrusive and invades privacy.

Europe's car crooks still favour Porsche

AMSTERDAM (R) — A Porsche owned by a British city dweller with no private parking place is the car most likely to be stolen in Europe, according to a Dutch report. French drivers also stand a fair chance of having their car stolen, but it is also the most likely to be recovered, says a survey on European car theft by the Dutch Justice Ministry. In any given four-year period, three out of every 100 Britons and Italians will have their car stolen while German and Dutch car owners. The chances of recovering a stolen car vary widely between regions. In the Netherlands, 60 per cent of stolen cars are recovered. But in the Dutch province of Limburg, close to the German border and a haven for gangs of international criminals, the owner has only a four in 10 chance of getting it back. Expensive cars tend to be lost forever since they are often stolen by professional thieves for sale abroad, while cheaper models more often find their way home. Mid-priced cars are the main attraction for joyriders, the researchers found.

Famous 1934 picture of Nessie is a fake

LONDON (AP) — The Loch Ness monster pictured in a famous 1934 photo was just a toy submarine fitted with a fake sea-serpent head, a newspaper report said. Loch Ness researchers Alastair Boyd and David Martin claim one of the conspirators in the hoax told them about it just before he died in November at the age of 90, the Sunday Telegraph reported. The report has not dealt a fatal blow to those who seek the truth behind the Loch Ness legend — or those who profit from the world's curiosity. "It's a breakthrough" in the scientific research, said David Cotton, chief general manager of the Loch Ness Centre at Drumadrochit, which welcomes tourists to an exhibition on research and theories about the "monster." "This head has always been a wild card to us... It was the only sighting of its sort and always caused us enormous problems," he said. "Our resident biologists have never been happy about this." It didn't fit in with the majority of reliable sightings. And because the photo was taken so long on a film plate rather than a modern roll of film, it could not be subjected to ultraviolet tests or computer enhancement, he said. The photograph was attributed to Robert Wilson, an eminent London gynecologist who said he took it on April 19, 1934, after his companion saw a commotion in the water and shouted: "My God, it's the monster." The newspaper said Mr. Boyd and Mr. Martin had learned that Mr. Wilson was part of a hoax hatched by his friend Marmaduke Wetherell, a filmmaker and self-styled big game hunter, hired by the Daily Mail in 1933 to hunt Nessie. Mr. Wetherell's son Ian and step-son Christopher Spurling were also in on it. Mr. Boyd and Mr. Martin said Mr. Spurling, the last surviving conspirator, told them he made the model for the 1934 photograph at Mr. Wetherell's request, the newspaper said. Mr. Spurling, a skilled model maker, made the "monster" one foot (0.3 metres) high and 18 inches (0.45 metres) long, it said. But Mr. Wetherell was caught out in another Nessie hoax involving phony monster footprints, so the photograph was given to Mr. Wilson to pass to the Daily Mail, the report said. The Daily Mail published the picture as a world exclusive. The Loch Ness monster legend dates back to AD 565 when St. Columba is said to have rescued a farmer from a monster's grasp. The first locally recorded sighting, reported by the Inverness Chronicle newspaper in 1868, spoke of a huge fish.

Frightened parrot gets \$370 in damages

STOCKHOLM (AP) — A court has ordered a burglar to pay the equivalent of \$370 in damages for scaring a parrot by breaking into a house. Since the burglary last year, the parrot has been afraid to stay at home alone and its owner is forced to drive the bird to the leaves of relatives when he leaves his house in Arboga in southern Sweden, the Swedish News Agency (TT) said. The court in Koping ruled that the thief, who was not identified in the line with Swedish press regulations, should pay the transportation costs as damages.

Brazilian prisoners free cardinal, other hostages

FORTALEZA, Brazil (R) — Fugitive Brazilian prisoners freed Wednesday a prominent Roman Catholic cardinal and other hostages taken during an escape from a maximum security jail in northeast Brazil Tuesday, officials said.

Among seven remaining captives freed was cardinal Dom Aloisio Lorscheider, a one-time candidate for Pope and the Archbishop of Fortaleza.

Authorities were concerned for the health of Cardinal Lorscheider, who is 69 and has a heart condition.

An aide to Ceara State Governor Ciro Gomes said the hostages were freed at Quixada. A small town south of the coastal city of Fortaleza, where they had been seized during a prison rebellion.

Mr. Gomes was travelling to pick up the released hostages in a helicopter. Earlier, the fugitives freed four of their captives on their way south. Police vehicles were tracking the fugitives, who were travelling in an armoured bullion van across Ceara state.

Police said the four freed earlier included a local councilman and his wife, a justice official and a photographer. They were released at the town of Cristais, 60 miles (100 kilometres) south of Fortaleza.

Power struggle intensifies in Japan coalition

TOKYO (R) — New tensions surfaced in Japan's fractious ruling coalition Wednesday over plans by a powerful alliance leader to form a new political group ahead of elections expected later this year.

Divisions in the eight-party coalition have been growing since a bitter power struggle developed between its titans, Ichiro Ozawa and Masayoshi Takemura.

Prime Minister Morihiro Hosokawa could be ready to join Mr. Ozawa in his plan to launch a new political group made up of the coalition's conservatives, a plan likely to infuriate Mr. Takemura and create new turmoil, commentators say.

"Hosokawa wants a powerful political group to be centred on Mr. Ozawa's Japan Renewal Party and his own Japan New Party," newspaper columnist Yoshitsuke Tajima said. "But by strengthening ties with Mr. Ozawa's group, he risks destabilising the ruling coalition."

Kozo Watanabe of the Renewal Party confirmed reports that preparations were under way to create a new political alliance, possibly by the end of April. He added that the union could also encompass members of Mr. Takemura's New Party Sakigake as well as the once-dominant Liberal Democratic Party (LDP).

"The temple of love, goodness, well-being and happiness cannot be built on blood, bitterness and revenge," he said.

Rutskoi wants referendum to renew Soviet Union

MOSCOW (R) — Former Russian Vice-President Alexander Rutskoi suggested Wednesday that the people of the former Soviet republics should vote on whether to form a new type of union.

In an emotional statement marking the third anniversary of a referendum vote in favour of maintaining the Soviet Union, Mr. Rutskoi said the successor Commonwealth of Independent States (CIS) could not survive.

"We are destined by God himself to live as one family, one nation, one state — a great power," he said. "Only through the unshakable will, the spiritual strength of fraternal peoples and their desire to live together, through an all-union movement and referendum can we reach our goal."

Mr. Rutskoi, who is positioning himself as a candidate for presidential elections in 1996, gave no details of what form of referendum or what kind of state he had in mind.

"We can only come to it by one path, the path of peace mutual understanding, responsible and restrained decisions not on paper and in endless discussions, but by creative action."

But his statement, which verged at times on the evangelical, maintained the calls for calm Mr. Rutskoi has issued since being freed from jail by a parliamentary amnesty last month.

Poll: Europeans, Americans think media is one-sided

NEW YORK (AP) — Most people surveyed in five European countries and in North America believe newspapers are one-sided and influenced by powerful people and institutions, a multinational news poll shows.

But the same respondents say news media are more credible than churches, government leaders and national legislatures, according to the survey by a U.S. research organisation, the Times Mirror Centre for the People and the Press.

The survey, conducted in January, shows Americans aren't well-informed about some world leaders. At least 87 per cent in the United Kingdom; 59 per cent in the United Kingdom; and 56 per cent in Italy.

The German public was found to be the best informed: 79 per cent correctly identified the PLO as having signed a peace accord with Israel, and 58 per cent could identify Dr. Ghali.

In France, 60 per cent of the respondents knew about the PLO-Israeli accord. Elsewhere, 29 per cent in Spain; 59 per cent in the United Kingdom; and 56 per cent in Italy.

A majority of people in each country — interviewed face-to-face or by telephone — say they favour a free press. But many of them also believe the government should be able to restrict reporting about military secrets, terrorist activities, violence and explicit sex.

U.S. media experts said they were not surprised by the apparent contradiction.

"Most Americans believe that they believe in a free press, but when it comes right down to it, they really don't," Paul McManis, executive director of the Freedom Forum First Amendment Centre at Vanderbilt University, said in a telephone interview Tuesday.

At least 36 per cent of French respondents believe in censorship, compared to 38 per cent in the U.K. and 28 per cent in Italy.

NEWS IN BRIEF

Brown smashes world 200m breaststroke record

BRISBANE, Australia (R) — Schoolgirl Rebecca Brown smashed the women's 200 metres breaststroke world record by more than half a second at the Australian swimming championships Wednesday. Brown's time of two minutes 24.76 seconds broke the previous record set by American Anita Nall by 0.59 seconds. The 16-year-old Brown was under world record pace at every turn of the 200 metres final and was never threatened by the other swimmers. Nall set her record at the U.S. Olympic trials in March 1992 and went on to take the bronze medal at the Barcelona Games. Brown, who came within 0.05 seconds of the world record at the Queensland championships in January, is Australia's first female world record holder since Tracey Wickham broke the 1500 metres freestyle mark in 1979.

Welsh manager resigns after only one match

CARDIFF (R) — John Toshack resigned as Welsh soccer manager Wednesday, after only one match in charge. Welsh Football Association (WFA) Chief Executive Alun Evans said Toshack would give his reasons at a news conference at London's Heathrow Airport Thursday. "He told me the reasons but I think it's only fair that he be allowed to make those public at his own press conference," said Evans. "I am leaving it up to Toshack to explain why he has decided to go." Toshack, who took the Wales job just 48 days ago, manages San Sebastian side Real Sociedad. Toshack's only match in charge for Wales ended in a 3-1 defeat by Norway in Cardiff last week when he was abused by sections of the crowd, some of whom called for a return of his predecessor Terry Yorath whose contract was not renewed by the WFA.

Germany remains on top of soccer poll

KANSAS CITY, Mo. (AP) — Germany remained on top for the 11th consecutive week in the sprint soccer poll, a weekly ranking of the top 10 national teams as voted on by an international panel of soccer journalists, organisers said Tuesday. Germany received 34 of a possible 38 first-place votes in accumulating 369 points. Brazil, which earned one first-place vote, stayed in second place with 343 points. The Netherlands held on to third place, with 283 points, while Italy, with two first-place votes, was fourth with 256 points. The leaders were followed by Argentina, with one first-place vote, with 199 points; Colombia, 191; Spain, 134, and Belgium 94. In the only change in the top 10, Cameroon edged ahead of Norway into ninth place with 53 points. Norway dropped to 47 with 51 points. Mexico just finished out of the top 10 with 47 points, followed by Sweden with 37.

Fry puts Birmingham squad up for sale

LONDON (R) — Barry Fry, manager of relegation threatened Birmingham City, put the entire 37-man squad of his first division side up for sale Tuesday. Fry has brought in 13 players since taking charge of the club in December but said he now has to reduce his wage bill. He circulated a list of 12 players available for transfer in January but that met with little response. "I have got to off-load. I can't even take a free transfer signing because we've got so many players on the staff," Fry said.

Prost not to return to Formula 1 racing

PARIS (AP) — Alain Prost, the four-time Formula one racing champion and winner of a record 51 Grand Prix events, confirmed Tuesday he will not return to auto racing. The future of the 39-year-old French racer, who announced his retirement last September, had been under intense scrutiny in France after he test drove for four days a McLaren-Peugeot in Portugal. "I will not race," Prost told the French television network TF1. "Actually I haven't changed my mind since last September," he said in an interview with the network in Paris. "The tryout with McLaren took place in a very honest way between two parties. It wasn't just to try out the car but also the spirit in which we could work together," he said. "I wanted to test myself, to know if I really wanted to get back into it. In the end, no."

Mansell 7-4 favourite to repeat Indy triumph

LONDON (AP) — British bookmaker Ladbrokes rates Nigel Mansell a 7-4 shot to repeat his 1993 Indy car auto racing triumph in 1994. "Mansell has proven his ability as a top class driver whatever type of car he is driving," said Ladbrokes spokesman Ian Wassell. The British driver won the Formula One title the year before he switched to Indy car racing. Ladbrokes quotes Paul Tracy the 4-1 second favourite with Al Unser Jr 6-1, Emerson Fittipaldi 7-1 and Michael Andretti and Bobby Rahal both 8-1.



Koss owed gold medal to new skates

AMSTERDAM (R) — Norway's Johann Olav Koss owes at least one of the three Olympic speed skating gold medals he won in Lillehammer last month to the revolutionary skates he used, two Dutch scientists said Wednesday. The scientists said "King" Koss would not have finished first in the 1,500-metre event if he had skated on regular blades as used by most of his rivals.

Gerrit Jan Van Ingen Schenau and Jos de Koning of Amsterdam's Free University said Koss's blades — developed by a Dutch manu-

facturer — had reduced frictional resistance by some 40 per cent.

The new blades, tested by the two researchers, gave the Norwegian a winning edge over Dutchman Rintje Ritsma who took the silver medal. They wrote in an article published in the Dutch newspaper Trouw.

"Our estimates show that Koss would have won two gold medals even without the new blades but would have lost one to Ritsma in the 1,500 metres," they wrote.

Lowly Pistons upset Supersonics

SEATTLE (R) — The Detroit Pistons, the NBA's second-worst team, used a 9-1 closing run to upset the league-best Supersonics' 89-87 in Seattle late Tuesday.

Terry Mills hit an 18-foot jumper with 43.4 seconds left to give the Pistons the victory. Detroit (17-46) trailed 73-68 after the third quarter but outscored Seattle 21-14 in the fourth to win its fourth in five games and the Sonics' seven-game home winning streak.

Seattle (45-16) held an 86-80 lead with 2:25 to go but Lindsey Hunter scored five of the final 10 points. Hunter hit consecutive free throws and a minute later connected from 3-point range to give Detroit an 87-86 lead.

Sam Perkins made 1-of-2 free throws to tie the game 87-87 with 1:08 left. Mills then hit his game-winning shot to cap a 12-point, 11-rebound night. Perkins missed a 15-foot baseline jumper, as time expired that would have tied the game.

Isiah Thomas led six Pistons in double figures with 20. Allan Houston added 10 of his 12 points in the second half.

Shawn Kemp scored 24 points and Kendall Gill and Perkins added 13 points each for Seattle.

In Houston, Hakeem Olajuwon scored nine of his 41 points in the fourth quarter as the Rockets outscored the Portland Trail Blazers 28-12 in the period to take a 105-99 victory.

Otis Thorpe scored 24 points as the Rockets raised their record to 3-0 versus Portland this season. Olajuwon had 13 rebounds and Thorpe 16.

Harvey Grant scored 25 points and Rod Strickland and Clifford Robinson added 19 apiece for Portland, which fell to 0-3 on its four-game road trip heading for San Antonio.

In Chicago, Scottie Pippen had 25 points, 12 rebounds and four steals and Horace Grant returned from back spasms to score 24 as the Chicago Bulls beat the Orlando Magic 108-98.

Shaquille O'Neal led Orlando with 23 points, 13 rebounds and five blocked shots before fouling out with 2:30 left.

In New York, Patrick Ewing's 26 points and 10 rebounds led the Knicks past the Indiana Pacers 88-82 for their seventh win in a row, matching their longest victory streak of the season.

Derek Harper added 17 points and 12 assists. Hubert Davis had 15 points and Charles Oakley got 15 points and 12 boards.

At Cleveland, Dan Majerle scored 15 of his 34 points in the third quarter as the Phoenix Suns built a 20-point lead and coasted to a 119-106 win over the injury-hit Cavaliers.

The Suns, who have won four straight, shot a blistering 90 per cent from the field in the third quarter (18-of-20).

In Miami, Glen Rice scored 28 points, including eight straight Heat points in the

fourth quarter, to spearhead a 101-94 victory over the Milwaukee Bucks.

In Los Angeles, Ron Harper scored 32 points to lift the Clippers to their season-high fourth straight victory, 108-105 over the Utah Jazz.

Karl Malone had 34 points and 14 rebounds for the Jazz, who had won 11 of their last 12 games.

At Minnesota, Stacey King scored six of his 16 points in a 12-2 run to start the fourth quarter as the Timberwolves snapped an eight-game losing streak with a 96-87 victory over the Philadelphia 76ers.

Isaiah Rider scored 21 points for the Wolves.

At Golden State, Chris Gatling scored 11 of his 20 points in the first quarter as the Warriors opened a 15-point lead and cruised past the Washington Bullets 123-93.

Chris Webber added 17 points and Billy Owens netted 16 for the Warriors.

Don MacLean scored 35 points to pace the Bullets, who have lost 14 of their last 18 games.

Sanchez Vicario, Sabatini ousted from Lipton tourney

KEY BISCAIYNE, Fla. (AP) — Gabriela Sabatini and two-time defending champion Arantxa Sanchez Vicario were eliminated in quarterfinal matches Tuesday at the Lipton championships.

The second-ranked Sanchez Vicario squandered five consecutive match points and lost 1-6, 7-6 (8-6), 6-3 to Brenda Schultz of the Netherlands. Sabatini, ranked fifth, was overwhelmed by 17-year-old American Lindsay Davenport 6-2, 6-1.

Swede Stefan Edberg became the first men's quarterfinalist by beating Paul Haarhuis of the Netherlands 7-6 (7-2), 6-1.

Davenport and Schultz both notched their biggest career wins. The upsets eliminate two rivals for top-ranked Steffi Graf, who has won 29 consecutive matches.

Sanchez Vicario led Schultz 6-1 in the second-set tiebreaker, but the Dutchwoman won the next seven points to force a third set.

Schultz, who stands 6-foot-2 (1.88 metres), slammed 10 aces and won 38 points at the net to 10 for Sanchez Vicario. The Spaniard converted only four of 13 break chances.

Schultz, ranked no. 32, had lost all five previous matches against Sanchez Vicario. Davenport, ranked 13th, avenged a three-set loss to Sabatini at last year's U.S.

Open. Andre Agassi, who ousted Boris Becker Monday, said he's not interested in a rematch with 17-year-old ballgirl Stephanie Flaherty.

"She intimidated me out there," Agassi said. "I don't want any part of her."

Flaherty won a bogus point against Agassi after a frustrated Becker asked her to replace him during a third-round match.

Becker then returned to the court, and Agassi completed a near-perfect performance for a 6-2, 7-5 victory.

Agassi and Flaherty were both pleased with their performances.

"I called my mom," said Flaherty, a high school senior and tennis team captain. "All of her friends had already called her at work and said, 'Look — your daughter is on National TV.'"

In other matches Monday, no. 6 seed Michael Chang joined Agassi in the fourth round by rallying to beat Alberto Berasategui of Spain 1-6, 6-4, 6-2. Chang was serving and trailing in the second set 0-3, 15-40, and overcame three break points to start a turnaround.

Jim Grabb, ranked no. 185, upset no. 4 Sergi Bruguera of Spain, 7-6 (7-4), 6-3. Top-ranked Pete Sampras beat David Wheaton 6-0, 5-7, 6-1; Edberg eliminated Jason Stol-

tenberg of Australia 7-6 (7-3), 6-1; and no. 5 Jim Courier beat Andrei Cherkasov of Russia 6-3, 7-5.

Top ranked Steffi Graf of Germany extended her winning streaks to 29 consecutive matches and 51 sets by beating Amy Frazier 6-3, 6-0. Sanchez Vicario swept Lori McNeil 6-2, 6-1.

Agassi's win was almost that lopsided, as he beat Becker for the seventh straight time. No other player has given the German so much trouble.

"Andre was really in his zone and couldn't miss a ball," Becker said. "He was hitting as hard as possible, and I served 115 MPH (184 kph) serves and he just put them back like nothing."

"I guess if he hears the name Becker, it just makes him play much better."

Agassi, seizing the momentum with a series of winners on his service return, won 10 consecutive points on his way to a quick 4-1 lead against Becker.

When Becker continued to struggle at the start of the second set, losing nine of the first 10 points, he handed his racket to a stunned Flaherty.

"I looked at him and he said, 'play the point,'" the ballgirl said. "We're not supposed to talk to the players, but Agassi signalled it was OK, so I decided to play. I don't remember if I hit a forehand or a backhand, I was so nervous."

Buser wins Iditarod in record time

NOME, Alaska (R) — Martin Buser beat the record by more than two hours Tuesday night when he crossed the finish line on snow-packed forest street here to win the 1,160-mile (1,870-kilometre) Iditarod trail sled dog race.

His official elapsed time of 10 days, 13 hours, two minutes and 39 seconds for the race from Anchorage to this Bering Sea town broke 1993 champion Jeff King's race record by 2½ hours.

Buser and his dogs were greeted by hundreds of cheering fans. Some of them standing on parked cars and building roofs. They turned out despite the minus-9-degree Fahrenheit (-22-C) weather.

But the dogs stopped about 20 feet (six metres) short of the finish line to roll in the snow and stare at the spectators, forcing Buser to lead the animals to the finish line.

The Swiss-born Buser, now a resident of Big Lake, Alaska, became the third competitor to win multiple Iditarod titles. He won his first title in 1992 and has joined the other repeat winners, five-time champion Rick Swenson and four-time champion Susan Butcher.

"The makings of a record always come in different parts," Buser told local radio station KNOM. "There's got to be good trail conditions and there's got to be good competition and, of course, you've got to have a good team."

Buser's closest competitor was 1983 champion Rick MacKey, about four hours behind on the route, to Nome, according to race reports.

At the finish, Buser was greeted by his wife and his two sons. He was also greeted by his mother, who travelled here from Switzerland, and whom

Buser said he has not seen in four years.

The quick victory pace was especially surprising because this year's Iditarod was slowed at first by a rearranged start, staged over two days instead of the usual single day.

Sparse snowfall around Anchorage prompted the change to a ceremonial downtown start and a relocated second-day start, which reduced the distance travelled by mushers by at least 20 miles.

Buser pioneered the use of sprint dogs, bred for shorter and faster races. In Iditarod teams, it was a smart plan, he said at the finish.

Fifty-eight mushers began the race in Anchorage March 5. As of Tuesday afternoon, three had dropped out and one was removed from the competition by race officials for safety reasons.

GOREN BRIDGE

WITH OMAR SHARIF
& TANIAH HIRSCH
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AN ITALIAN COUNT

Both vulnerable. South deals.
NORTH
♠ A 6 5
♥ Q J 7 5
♦ K 10 7 5
♣ 7 6

WEST EAST
♠ 8 7 4 3 ♠ 10 2
♥ 8 6 5 ♥ A 10
♦ 8 6 5 ♦ Q 4 3
♣ J 4 2 ♣ A K 9 8 5 3

SOUTH
♠ K Q J
♥ K 9 4 2
♦ A 5 3 2
♣ Q 10

The bidding:
South West North East
1 NT Pass 2 ♠ Dbl
2 ♥ Pass 4 ♥ Pass
Pass Pass

Opening lead: Two of ♠

There is nothing that the average player likes more, yet is viewed with disdain by the expert, than the simple finesse. Make it a two-way finesse and matters change. While ordinary mortals flounder, the star seldom goes wrong. Here's why.

The auction started off routinely with a one-trump opening bid and a two-club inquiry for major suits. East seized the opportunity to double, showing a club suit. That

did not stop South from introducing hearts and North was full value for the raise to game.

West dutifully led a low club. East cashed the king and ace and then shifted to a spade. Declarer, the great Italian star Benito Garozzo, won in hand, forced out the ace of trumps to complete the defensive book, won the spade return in hand and now was faced with the problem of bringing in the diamond suit without losing a trick to the queen.

If John or Jane Doe was at the helm of this hand, they would probably be engaging in a lot of heavenward gazing, some heavy sighing and then a guess. Garozzo did better.

After first drawing trumps and noting East's discard on the third round, Garozzo cashed the ace of spades, fetching another club from East. The count of the hand was now complete.

East had shown only four cards in the major suits and, since the lead had marked West with at least three clubs, no more than six clubs. Therefore, East had to hold three or more diamonds and was a favorite to have the queen. So South cashed the king and ran the ten to lead the game.

Indian Cultural Gathering

The Indian community in Jordan is holding a cultural gathering on Friday, March 18. All Indians are invited to attend.

Venue: The Indian Embassy premises, the First Circle.
Time: Events start at 12 noon sharp

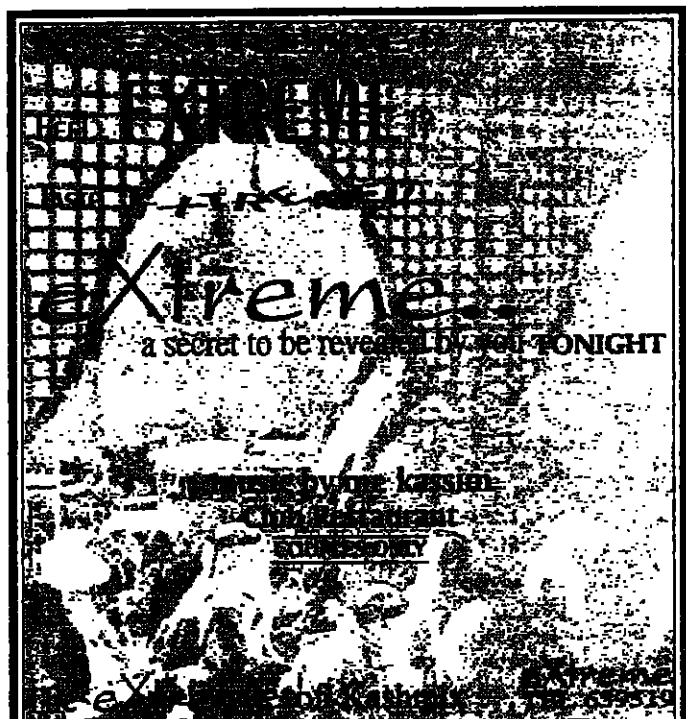
U.S. TAXPAYER ASSISTANCE

A taxpayer service specialist from the U.S. Internal Revenue Service will be at the American Embassy in Amman on March 30 to April 7 to assist U.S. taxpayers.

A special tax seminar will be conducted on Thursday March 31, and Sunday April 3, at 8:30 a.m. in the United States Information Service auditorium at the embassy. Anyone who is interested will be welcome to attend. No reservation is necessary.

Individual assistance will be provided by appointment on April 4 to 6. Each taxpayer is advised to have a copy of his or her last filed return and to have all papers well organized and scheduled to the extent possible when appearing for an appointment. Appointments may be made by calling 820-101, extension 2062.

Income tax forms and information booklets are now available in the consular section of the embassy.



TO DAY	Cinema Tel.: 634144	Cinema Tel.: 699238	Cinema Tel.: 677420	Tel.: 618274 - 618275	Tel.: 675571	Nabil & Hisham's Tel.: 625155
	PHILADELPHIA	PLAZA	CONCORD	AMMOUN THEATRE	Nabil Al Mashini Theatre	AHLAN THEATRE
	Jean-Claude Van Damme HARD TARGET Shows: 11:00, 1:30, 3:30, 6:15, 8:30, 10:30	Adel Emam in TERRORIST Shows: 10:00, 12:30, 3:00, 5:00, 6:45, 8:30, 10:30	CONCORD '1' Sylvester Stallone — in Demolition Man Shows: 12:30, 3:00, 6:30, 8:30, 10:30 CONCORD '2' Women of Desire Shows: 5:30, 7:00, 8:45, 10:30 Special film for children Dennis The Menace Shows: 11:30 a.m., 1:30, 3:00 p.m.	Opening Soon A political comedy Forbidden x Forbidden	presents a play entitled: Al Ilm Nuron A popular political comedy Actors: Abeer Issa, Daoud Jalajel, Hassan Al Shaer, Fuad Shomali in addition to other comedians Every night at 8:15 Tickets are sold all day Coming soon: The next play	Nabil and Hisham Theatre presents Ahlan Arab Summit Conference (play) daily at 9:15 p.m. Theatre is closed Sundays, Monday and Tuesdays

NEWS IN BRIEF

'Son of Yemeni speaker escapes attack'

DUBAI (R) — The son of the speaker of the Yemeni parliament escaped an assassination attempt in which one of his bodyguards was wounded, a Saudi newspaper said on Wednesday. London-based Al Sharq Al Awsat said in a report from Sanaa that Sheikh Hussein, eldest son of Sheikh Abdullah Ben Hussein Al Ahmar, was ambushed on Tuesday on his way to the capital from his tribe's heartland some 60 kilometres north of Sanaa. Officials and diplomats in the Yemeni capital, where offices remain closed for the Eid Al Fitr holiday, could not immediately confirm the report. Sheikh Abdullah is also leader of the Islamist Islah Party, a member of the three-party coalition government that has been paralysed since August by a row between the two main partners — parties loyal to President Ali Abdullah Saleh and his Vice President Ali Salem Al Beedh. Al Sharq Al Awsat said a three-car convoy in which Sheikh Hussein was travelling to Sanaa was ambushed by unknown armed men. Their attackers escaped. The newspaper said the attempt was unrelated to Yemen's political crisis but apparently linked to a dispute between Sheikh Ahmar's Hashed tribal confederation and the rival Bakel confederation.

Somali leaders plan conference

NAIROBI (AP) — A U.N. spokesman said Somali faction leaders will meet later this week in Nairobi to plan a conference on reducing the tensions in the southern city of Kismayo. Ambassador Lansana Kouyate has been meeting individually with the faction leaders and is encouraged by "their willingness to put their differences behind them and look to the future," said U.N. spokesman George Bennett. He said details are still being worked out, but that the United Nations hopes the faction leaders will meet Thursday and Friday at the U.N. complex in Nairobi to set the agenda, venue and date for a conference in Kismayo. Faction leaders in Nairobi include Mohammad Farah Aided, the main warlord in southern Mogadishu, Ali Mahdi Mohammad, General Aided's main rival who controls northern Mogadishu; Kismayo; and Omar Jess, an ally of Gen. Aided's whose militia men were driven from Kismayo. Mr. Bennett said it was not yet clear which faction leaders would attend the meeting this week at the U.N. complex.

Guerrillas reject U.N. options for Sahara

PARIS (R) — Polisario guerrillas fighting for independence of Western Sahara reject two United Nations options for a settlement and have reservations about the third, the official Algerian news agency APS reported. The agency monitored in Paris quoted sources close to the guerrilla movement reacting to proposals made by U.N. Secretary-General Boutros Ghali to the Security Council on Saturday. Dr. Ghali proposed three options to break a deadlock over a U.N. peace plan for the 18-year-long conflict in the former Spanish colony claimed by Morocco. APS said the Polisario rejected two options, either to hold a self-determination referendum at the end of this year regardless of the views of either side, or to drop the whole idea and withdraw most of the U.N. peacekeeping force. On the third option, to continue talks until the end of June to arrive at agreement on the question of who is eligible to vote in the referendum, APS said the Polisario expressed reservations because it favours Morocco.

Ruler of Bahrain to visit Syria

BAHRAIN (AP) — The emir Sheikh Isa Bin Salman Al Khalifa, will pay an official visit to Syria on Sunday at the invitation of President Hafez Al Assad, it was announced Wednesday. Sheikh Isa will lead a ministerial delegation and will hold talks with Mr. Assad that will include the Middle East peace process "and means of achieving a comprehensive, just and lasting settlement," said the announcement carried by the official Gulf News Agency.

Fire kills 7 in German home for aliens

STUTTGART (R) — Seven people, including two children, were killed when a house occupied mainly by foreigners burst into flames early Wednesday, German police said. Seventeen people were injured, some of them in serious condition. German radio said many of the occupants were Pakistanis, but police were unable to confirm this. A police spokesman said the authorities did not rule out arson in the apartment house fire in the southern German city of Stuttgart and that the cause was being investigated. But he told reporters there was no indication it was set off by right-wing extremists, whose favourite firebomb targets are foreigners' homes and hostels for asylum-seekers.

Clinton to address French assembly in June

PARIS (R) — U.S. President Bill Clinton was invited Wednesday to address the National Assembly when he visits France in June for celebrations marking the 50th anniversary of the D-Day allied landings during World War II. Assembly Speaker Philippe Seguin said Mr. Clinton would speak in parliament on June 7, the day after ceremonies in Normandy which he will attend with President Francois Mitterrand, Britain's Queen Elizabeth and six other heads of state and government.

Tiger kills South Africa TV journalist

LISBON (AP) — A tiger being transferred to South Africa broke free from its zoo cage in Angola's war-torn capital and mauled a South African television cameraman to death, news reports said Wednesday. The cameraman, identified as Rick Lomba, was filming the transfer Tuesday of 29 animals from Luanda's zoo to South Africa. The tiger was among a number of animals that were drugged for transfer to zoo in South Africa. Apparently, the drug did not take on the tiger who attacked. The Pan-African Association of Zoos sponsored Tuesday's airlift of the animals to Johannesburg and then on to eight South African zoos, the Portuguese news agency LUSA said. Due to Angola's continuing 18-year civil war, Luanda has barely enough food to keep its human population properly fed. Its zoo was neglected and the animals went for days without eating. LUSA said zoo guards killed the tiger immediately after the attack.

Shevardnadze undergoes drug test

TBILISI, Georgia (AP) — Georgian leader Eduard Shevardnadze voluntarily underwent a drug test on Wednesday, initiating a campaign to cleanse his government of illegal drug users. Mr. Shevardnadze said last month that many Georgian public servants take drugs and promised to fire those caught. "Government officials must be free of vices," he said. "I would volunteer to pass a drug test to start this campaign." He fulfilled his promise Wednesday, undergoing the test in the Georgian parliament building which houses his offices. Mr. Shevardnadze, a former Soviet foreign minister, has faced numerous problems since returning to his native Georgia in 1992, including continuing fighting in the secessionist region of Abkhazia and the virtual collapse of Georgia's economy. Georgia also has been beset by a sharp increase in the crime rate and drug trafficking.

Bomb shatters Nicosia mosque windows

NICOSIA (AP) — A bomb shattered the windows of a small disused mosque in the Greek Cypriot sector of Nicosia during the night, police announced Wednesday. The blast also broke windows in the shopping street where the mosque is located. There were no injuries. "It is not yet clear whether the bomb was directed against the mosque," said police spokesman Savvas Antonides. He added the explosion might be the work of agents trying to create tension between the Christian Greek and Muslim Turkish Cypriot communities. This was the second blast against a mosque in the Greek Cypriot sector of the divided capital in less than a month.



FUNERAL: Thousands of mourners Wednesday attend the funeral of Algerian theatre director Abdel Qader Aloulou, who was shot by unidentified gunmen on March 10. Aloulou, 55, was flown to Paris after the attack but died in hospital four days later. His body was flown home Tuesday (AFP photo)

Russia may sign NATO partnership this month

BRUSSELS (R) — Russia has indicated to the North Atlantic Treaty Organisation (NATO) it may sign a key partnership deal on closer military links by the end of this month, a move that would reassure the West after increasingly sharp attacks from Moscow.

Alliance sources told Reuters on Wednesday NATO had received information through diplomatic channels that Russia could be ready to sign the "Partnership for Peace," which the alliance has offered to former Soviet republics and Eastern European states.

"The Russians have indicated they may join by the end of the month," said one source, who asked not to be identified.

No date has been set but Russian Foreign Minister Andrei Kozyrev may come to NATO headquarters to sign the partnership deal, which provides for joint exercises, training and cooperation in areas such as defence planning.

Many Eastern European states such as Poland and Hungary, anxious to become full members of NATO, have joined the scheme since it was offered by alliance leaders to their former cold war enemies at a summit in January.

Moldova became the 12th country to sign on Wednesday. But the absence of Russia — Europe's biggest military power — has worried NATO, particularly since Moscow has shown signs of moving away from reform, worried neighbouring states like the Baltics and criticised Western policy in areas like Bosnia.

Moscow has also attacked the partnership scheme, saying it did not take into account Russia's great power status and that it was little more than a

prelude to expanding NATO's borders.

"There are forces which cannot wait to join NATO," Mr. Kozyrev said earlier this month.

Russian President Boris Yeltsin has strongly opposed NATO taking on any of Moscow's former Warsaw Pact satellites as full members, unless Russia is also included.

NATO has rejected any suggestion that it should offer Russia a special status within the partnership, which does not include offers of membership or security guarantees, or that it should allow Moscow to keep a "sphere of influence" in Eastern Europe.

The 16-nation NATO says it alone will decide if and when to take on new members, although diplomats concede that Russian opposition has prevented it from doing so in the near future.

In Moscow, Defence Minister Pavel Grachev, taking his struggle for more funds to the public, warned Wednesday that the Russian army was so poor it could neither reform itself nor defend the country properly.

"We cannot be accused of militarism. We are only asking for the bare minimum," he told a news conference.

Mr. Grachev said the draft 1994 budget, approved in principle by the government earlier this month, provided for less than half of the army's needs and needed to be revised.

"If the situation with financing does not change, there could be no talk about not only reforming the army... but about securing Russia's safety as well," he said.

This year's budget, which has yet to be approved by parliament, allocated the armed forces 37.1 trillion roubles (\$22 billion), less than half the 80 trillion roubles (\$47 billion) the Defence Ministry wants.

Mr. Grachev said that if the amount was not increased, the armed forces would be able to pay for only a quarter of the modern arms it had ordered from the military-industrial complex.

That meant many industrial giants would have to lay off millions of workers, fanning social tensions across the country.

Lack of money would also mean that social programmes would have to be cut. This would add to the miseries of thousands of servicemen, many of them already uneasy about the move from the relative comfort of Eastern Europe and Germany and some with nowhere to live in Russia.

"We cannot cut military expenditure endlessly — this threatens to damage combat ability and aggravate social problems in the armed forces," Mr. Grachev said.

The main planks of Russia's military reform are to set up mobile units instead of permanently based forces and to cut numbers. Mr. Grachev said the armed forces should be reduced from its current level of 2.3 million to 2.1 million this year and to 1.9 million next.

He confirmed that an earlier target of a 1.5 million-strong army had been dropped as it proved too low when his analysts did proper calculations.

Mr. Grachev fiercely dismissed any suggestions that the army might step into politics and grab power.

"As long as I am defence minister, there will be no military dictatorship. We will adhere to the constitution," he said.

Saudi-Iranian row flares again over quota for pilgrims

DUBAI (Agencies) — Saudi Arabia has strongly attacked Iranian spiritual leader Ayatollah Ali Khamenei and said it is baffled by contradictory signals from different Iranian leaders.

An official statement carried by the Saudi Press Agency (SPA) late on Tuesday described as irresponsible charges by Ayatollah Khamenei that Saudi Arabia was hindering the performance of the Haj pilgrimage by Iranian Muslims.

"While Iranian President Akbar Hashemi Rafsanjani continues to send us messages and envoys in order to improve ties and bring our points of view closer, the religious authority Ali Khamenei surprises us with irresponsible statements followed by a frenzied media campaign," the statement said.

The new war of words between the two powers that dominate the oil-rich Gulf seemed inevitable after Ayatollah Khamenei made his charges in a sermon marking 'Eid Al Fitr'.

He hinted that Saudi Arabia may be acting as a tool of the United States. Saudi Arabia's ally and Iran's declared enemy.

"Unfortunately, the issue of the Haj has not followed its proper course so far this year. The Saudi government is putting obstacles in the way, and I do not know why," Ayatollah Khamenei said in his sermon on Sunday.

He warned against the Haj, which falls due in May this year, becoming "another tool in the hands of America and big powers."

"We will not pay attention to mean statement by some or frenzied media campaigns aimed at inciting strife among Muslims," the Saudi statement said.

"We are much baffled by the contradictions of Iranian leaders when addressing us... which camp do we credit and with which of the two men do we deal?" the Saudi statement asked.

Since some 400 people, mainly Iranian pilgrims, died in clashes in the 1987 Haj

season. The two neighbours have often engaged in bitter recrimination, most commonly as the Haj season approaches.

Mohammad Mohammadi Reyshahri, who has led Iranian pilgrims for the past three years, said on Tuesday Saudi Arabia wants to set a limit of 55,000 Iranians making the Haj this year.

He said this violated a 1991 accord giving Iran a quota of 115,000 under a deal in which Tehran and Riyadh restored ties and ended a three-year Iranian boycott of the pilgrimage.

Saudi Arabia has consistently denied that a special deal was agreed with Iran on the number of pilgrims to be allowed each year and says Iranians must adhere to a 1988 quota agreed by the Organisation of the Islamic Conference.

Riyadh says the quota system was introduced to ease overcrowding at pilgrimage sites during extensive expansion work undertaken by the Saudi government to accommodate more than two million Muslims who perform the Haj rites each year.

The Saudi statement reasserted the principles of the quota system, which sets the number of pilgrims from each country as one in every thousand of Muslims.

Mr. Reyshahri warned Tuesday that Tehran-Riyadh ties could suffer unless Saudi Arabia allowed at least 115,000 Iranians to the pilgrimage.

Mr. Reyshahri said Saudi Arabia was contravening an agreement with Iran by trying to limit the number of Iranians. He called on Riyadh "to stop creating problems."

"The problems created by the Saudis will make Muslims think that the Haj ceremonies have been turned into a tool in the hand of the United States and big powers," the radio quoted Mr. Reyshahri as saying.

Last year Mr. Reyshahri returned from the Haj in a huff to protest alleged harassment by Saudi forces girded for possible Iranian demonstrations.

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COLUMN

Element 106 named for university professor

SAN DIEGO (AP) — The 106th element in the Periodic Table has been named "seaborgium" in honour of Nobel Laureate Glenn T. Seaborg, a University of California chemistry professor. Prof. Seaborg is the co-discoverer of plutonium and nine other transuranium elements, which come after uranium on the periodic table and are artificially created in particle accelerators. The announcement of the name seaborgium, identified by the chemical symbol Sg, came from the element's co-discoverer, Kenneth Hulet, a retired chemist from the Lawrence Livermore National Laboratory. Dr. Hulet made the announcement at an American Chemical Society annual meeting. Prof. Seaborg is associate director-at-large for the Lawrence Berkeley Laboratory. For discovering plutonium, Prof. Seaborg shared the 1951 Nobel Prize for Chemistry with former LBL Director Edwin MacMillan. Prof. Seaborg was chairman of the Atomic Energy Commission, now the Nuclear Regulatory Commission, from 1961 to 1971. Seaborgium's discovery was confirmed last summer.

Woman wins Imitation Hemingway contest

LOS ANGELES (AP) — "Then she smiled," Bernice Richmond wrote. "She did not have to smile. She did not have to lick her lips with that tongue, the kind that would not quit. What was she trying to do? Was this her way of being coy at 1 a.m., or was there a poppy seed caught in her teeth? Sound bad? You bet. Ms. Richmond became the first woman winner of the annual International Imitation Hemingway Competition. Ms. Richmond, who owns a greeting card company in New Jersey, said she used "divergent thinking" to mimic America's paragon of masculinity and compose a pithy passage titled "Here's To You." "I can get into anybody's head," she said. The rules for the contest are simple: Send one really good page of really bad Hemingway. Be funny, be earnest. "Go on only knew," Ms. Richmond's entry continued. "If there was a God. And if there was a God and he knew, he was not talking. And even if he did know and was talking, no one would have been listening. Not here. Not now." "Short and sweet and wonderfully clever," said author Ray Bradbury, one of a panel of judges that included Hemingway's son, Jack Hemingway, and novelists John Grisham, Willie Morris and Barry Hannah. Ms. Richmond said she was a bit of a male chauvinist, so I guess I understand the whole Hemingway mindset," she said. "It probably helped me win." When she's not writing testosterone-pumped pastiche, Ms. Richmond writes novels and sketches "demented drawings." The winner of the 14th annual contest was announced Monday at a \$100-a-plate fundraiser for PEN, the writers group that fights censorship.

Cleanup keeps Bosphorus closed after tanker fire

ISTANBUL (Agencies) — The oil-fouled Bosphorus waterway remained closed for a third on Wednesday even after a burning tanker was tugged out of harm's way into the Black Sea.

The death toll from Sunday's collision between the 132,517-deadweight-tonne (DWT) Nassia tanker and the 25,400-DWT freighter Shipbrok, both Cypriot-flagged, rose to 19, with 10 seamen missing presumed dead.

Anatolian news agency said 18 of the bodies recovered were from the Shipbrok and one was from the Nassia. Officials said 19 crew members had been injured and eight rescued unharmed.

The tanker was still belching black smoke from its forward tanks after two Turkish tugs towed it out of the Bosphorus and about 40 kilometres west along the Black Sea coast.

The Istanbul port authority said the strait between the Mediterranean and Black Seas would remain closed until it was safe. Port officials were not specific when that might be.

Environment Minister Riza Akcali said a 12-man Dutch team of firefighters and pollution control experts had arrived to help put out the fire and clean the spill.

He said the blaze was under control and that no more explosions were expected.

The fire is under control, but we don't know how long it will take to put it out," Ismail Sefa Er, the head of Istanbul port authority, told Reuters as he monitored firefighting efforts from the Karaburun coastguard station on the Black Sea.

Istanbul's Deputy Governor, Rubi Paker said two ships had begun a cleanup effort to scoop patches of crude from the narrow 30-kilometre strait and remove oil washed onto the shore.

"Although the tanker has been removed from the Bosphorus, the channel is still closed because of the danger that shipping traffic may disperse the oil patches," Mr. Paker told Reuters.

State Minister Tez said at least 80 ships were stacked up near the Marmara Sea and Black Sea entrances to the Bosphorus waiting for it to reopen.

MAASTRICHT, Netherlands (AP) — Rubies, Diamonds and Rembrandts. If you are wealthy enough to buy them you should be here. More than 150 of the world's leading galleries, collectors and museum curators have set up shop, creating a posh bazaar of collectibles known as the European Fine Art Fair. Even before the fair opened to the public Saturday, 4,657 visitors paid 150 guilders (\$79) each for a Friday preview at which a rembrandt drawing and a painting by Jan Breughel The Younger were sold. "It's very encouraging for the art market because it's rather suggests that there's more money in the economy in general," fair spokeswoman Sue Bond said. But she conceded that many fair goers are rich to be immune to recession. The fair encompasses art ranging from Egyptian antiquities to modern and contemporary, medieval manuscripts, antique furniture and artifacts, and jewelry.

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Knesset passes meat-ban bill, boosting Rabin's majority base

TEL AVIV (AP) — Israel's parliament banned importing non-kosher meat Wednesday, paving the way for Prime Minister Yitzhak Rabin to regain a solid majority to back his peace policies.

After a marathon session, the Knesset voted 65-10 in the bill's third and final reading before dawn. The ultra-religious Shas Party had made passage of the bill a condition of returning to Mr. Rabin's coalition.

Mr. Rabin has led a minority government ever since Shas broke away last summer on an unrelated issue. But on Monday, Shas leader Aryeh Deri initiated a coalition agreement expanding Mr. Rabin's support in the 120-seat parliament from 56 to 62, pending ratification of the ban on non-kosher meat.

Until now, Mr. Rabin's peace policies have had the backing of five legislators from

Arab parties giving him a gross majority of one.

The frozen beef import law was vehemently opposed by Mr. Rabin's other coalition partner, the 12-seat Meretz Party, whose left-wing policies are staunchly against religious coercion.

The bill won support from the right-wing National Religious Party, even though it meant strengthening Mr. Rabin's hand, since they could not ideologically oppose the bill.

Mr. Rabin has said he needs a "Jewish majority" to push through controversial policies in his negotiations with the Palestinians and Syrians.

Butchers have said that meat prices would drop dramatically, some estimate by up to 30 per cent, if imported non-kosher meat had been allowed into the country.

The government had used its

monopoly in the past to prevent the import of non-kosher meat, meat that fails to meet Jewish ritual standards. But when Mr. Rabin announced plans to privatise the meat industry, Shas demanded that the unofficial ban be written into law.

Mr. Rabin pushed a ban through the parliament last summer, but it was thrown out by the supreme court as failing to meet the constitutional guarantee of free enterprise.

As a result, the government last week pushed through legislation altering constitutional law to say that free enterprise must conform to Israel's "democratic and Jewish character." This means the new ban will probably stand up to supreme court review.

The new law will not affect the raising of pork in Israel, and non-kosher meat packing plants will continue to operate.

There had been no shipping to Iraq through the Gulf after the war over Kuwait until November 1993.

The U.S.-led naval force concentrated maritime interceptions in the Red Sea, where it monitored the movement of shipping to Jordan, which has land borders with Iraq.

Latest statistics show that 19,800 ships of various flags have been queried by radio for enquiries about their destination and cargo, 8,700 of them stopped and boarded for a closer search, and 457 prevented from continuing.

He said he assumed the Ukrainian vessel was let through because it carried implements intended for agriculture, and therefore for food.

According to Cmdr. Cole, it was carrying 51 tractors and 61 harvesters. "It had an authorisation letter from the United Nations, so it was allowed through," he said.

"It's not the first time that a ship with such items has been allowed through with U.N. authorisation," he said.

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Ships are diverted mainly because of incorrect manifests or because goods are stacked

in a way to prevent a proper search.

The U.S. Navy has four ships in the Red Sea at present for the intercepts, out of a total of about 10 it has currently deployed in the region.

The deployed flotilla also includes two amphibious groups — the USS Pelieu and the USS Inchon groups — currently off Somalia.

An aircraft carrier also has been assigned continuously to the region. Cmdr. Cole said the carrier USS Independence and its battleships had departed the Gulf, but that the USS Carl Vinson and its battlegroup were currently off Japan and on call to reach the Gulf within a short time if needed.

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